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## ABSTRACT

This document reports the evaluation of the collaborately developed Modular Training Framework (MainFrame), a British curriculum development project, built around a commitment to a competency-based, modular credit accumulation program. The collaborators were three local education authorities (LEAs), those of Bedfordshire, Haringey, and Sheffield, later joined by Liverpool LEA and the Wirral Metropolitan College. Section 1 of the report is an overview of evaluation objectives. Section 2 outlines the introduction of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), subsequent changes and developments, and the response of the further education sector. Development of the project is discussed with emphasis on the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration. Section 3 on program design considers the background to the trend to modularization; emphasizes trainee-centered and negotiated curricula, access, and curriculum entitlement; and focuses on integration in the MainFrame modular system. The methodology used for the derivation of a competency-based program and associated assessment considerations are examined. Section 4 evaluates how MainFrame operates in practice. Topics include delivery of programs, different learning and teaching styles, initial assessment, action plans, guidance and support, assessment and its relationship to National Vocational Qualification, and integration of on- and off-the-job training. Section 5 considers the institutional support required to make MainFrame effective, the critical role of the liaison officer, and staff development needs. Section 6 summarizes major lessons in the context of MainFrame's possible future developments. Appendices provide a checklist of questions used in the evaluation and a training inventory form.

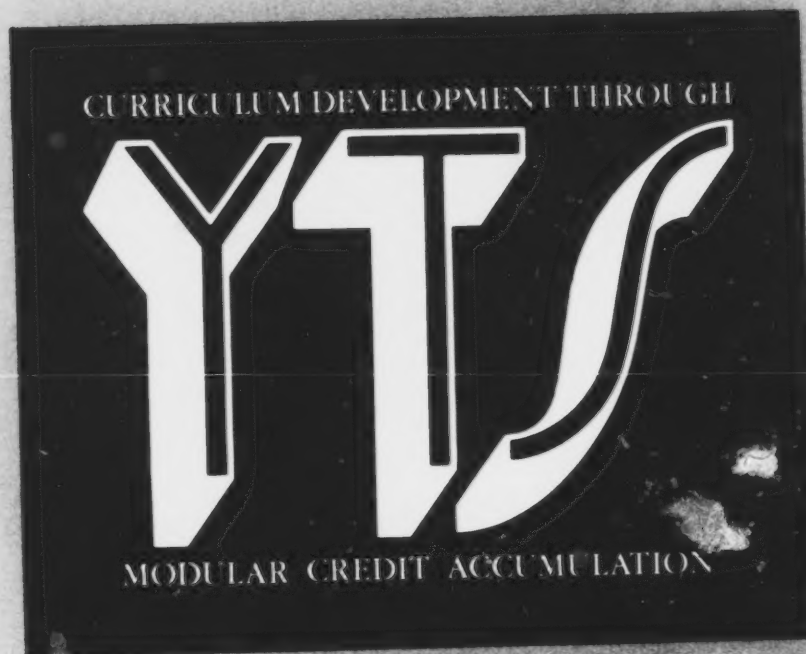
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|                                                            |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                                                            | <i>Page</i> |
| Foreword                                                   | v           |
| Acronyms and Abbreviations                                 | vii         |
| <b>1. Introduction: Monitoring and Evaluation</b>          |             |
| Evaluation of the LEA collaboration                        | 1           |
| Types of evaluation                                        | 2           |
| Training Agency requirements for monitoring and evaluation | 3           |
| Aims of the evaluation                                     | 4           |
| Objectives                                                 | 5           |
| MainFrame and FEU evaluation                               | 6           |
| Responses to evaluation findings                           | 6           |
| Contextualising the findings                               | 7           |
| Structure of the report                                    | 9           |
| <b>2. Needs Analysis</b>                                   |             |
| The Youth Training Scheme                                  | 12          |
| The response of FE                                         | 15          |
| MainFrame                                                  | 16          |
| <b>3. Programme Design</b>                                 |             |
| Modular programme design                                   | -30         |
| MainFrame modular system                                   | 31          |
| Modular curriculum development                             | 34          |
| Individual training programmes                             | 38          |
| Assessment and accreditation                               | 39          |
| FEU commentary                                             | 48          |
| <b>4. Implementation</b>                                   |             |
| Delivering the MainFrame modular system                    | 52          |
| Individual training programmes                             | 53          |
| Training plans                                             | 62          |
| Assessment and review                                      | 64          |
| Guidance and support                                       | 66          |
| Progression                                                | 66          |
| The NCVQ perspective                                       | 67          |
| Integration                                                | 70          |
| Meeting the four YTS outcomes                              | 73          |
| Effective programme review                                 | 79          |
| FEU commentary                                             | 82          |
| <b>5. Management and Organisation</b>                      |             |
| LEA central organisation of YTS                            | 90          |
| The advantages and disadvantages of centralisation         | 94          |
| The role of the liaison officer                            | 98          |
| New partners and the transferability of the model          | 99          |
| FEU commentary                                             | 100         |
| <b>6. Summary</b>                                          |             |
| Needs analysis                                             | 113         |
| Programme design                                           | 114         |
| Implementation                                             | 117         |
| Programme review                                           | 119         |
| Management and organisation                                | 120         |

## **Appendix 1**

|                                                                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Checklist of questions that informed evaluation,<br>based on YTS design framework | 123 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|

## **Appendix 2**

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Training inventory | 128 |
|--------------------|-----|

## **Illustrations**

|          |                                         |     |
|----------|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Box 1    | Liverpool LEA                           | 18  |
| Box 2    | Wirral Metropolitan College             | 19  |
| Box 3    | Credit accumulation project             | 28  |
| Box 4    | The HELIX project                       | 28  |
| Box 5    | The PETRA project                       | 29  |
| Box 6    | DACUM and Delphi                        | 36  |
| Box 7    | The C&G six-sector project              | 37  |
| Box 8    | Boddingtons Brewery                     | 39  |
| Box 9    | Bedfordshire ethnic minorities project  | 57  |
| Box 10   | Bedfordshire women's project            | 57  |
| Box 11   | Haringey's women in technology project  | 58  |
| Box 12   | IT end-user project                     | 69  |
| Box 13   | Trainee information systems             | 80  |
| Box 14   | Haringey's post-16 curriculum framework | 101 |
| Figure 1 | FEU model of curriculum development     | 11  |
| Figure 2 | Design framework for two-year YTS       | 14  |
| Figure 3 | MainFrame and the four YTS outcomes     | 41  |



This report describes the evaluation by FEU of collaborative development work in three LEAs. The programme began in 1985 by responding to learning needs, particularly through two-year YTS. Bedfordshire, Haringey and Sheffield LEAs, later joined by Liverpool LEA and the Wirral Metropolitan College, developed a training programme known as MainFrame which is capable of being implemented by various providers across vocational sectors.

This report will be of interest not only to scheme managers and practitioners involved in the implementation of YTS, but also to curriculum managers considering, in a variety of contexts, the issues of modularity, unit accreditation, work-based learning and assessment, and the related issues of staff development and LEA co-ordination of provision.

The report concludes that MainFrame generally provides high-quality programmes for a wide range of trainees and has made a significant contribution to the national debate about modular programmes and accreditation. In addition, it has established effective systems for the management and support of education and training provision which otherwise may be marginalised.

The FEU evaluation was undertaken over a period of two years and the strategy employed was one of action research which encouraged a developmental approach by the three LEAs. During the evaluation they responded to some issues which required further development work, and this will continue in the future. The project was jointly directed by Stuart McCoy, FEU Development Officer, and Geoff Carroll, MainFrame Programme Development Officer. The project evaluation officer was Paul Armstrong.

FEU published a series of bulletins (*Two-Year Youth Training Schemes: An Evaluation of LEA Modular Programmes*) during the evaluation, describing various aspects of the programme. The full report of the project, of which this is an edited version, runs to almost 400 pages; a limited number of copies are available on request from FEU.

At this time of considerable change, the messages from this project are timely and important. It is likely that there will be a growth in multi-agency provision and increased demand for part-time, individualised modular learning packages and programmes which provide breadth and relevance. This evaluation of the MainFrame programme illustrates some strategies for meeting these needs.

Geoff Stanton  
Chief Officer  
Further Education Unit

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|           |                                                                  |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABC       | Administrative, Business and Commercial Training Group           |
| ATC       | Accredited Training Centre                                       |
| ATO       | Approved Training Organisation                                   |
| BTEC      | Business and Technician Education Council                        |
| C&G       | City and Guilds of London Institute                              |
| CBI       | Confederation of British Industry                                |
| CCETSW    | Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work        |
| CITB      | Construction Industry Training Board                             |
| CPVE      | Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education                          |
| DACUM     | Developing a Curriculum                                          |
| ECCTIS    | Education Counselling and Credit Transfer Information System     |
| ERA       | Education Reform Act 1988                                        |
| ET        | Employment Training                                              |
| FE        | Further Education                                                |
| FEU       | Further Education Unit                                           |
| GCSE      | General Certificate of Secondary Education                       |
| GRIST     | Grant-Related In-Service Training                                |
| HESTA     | Haringey Education Service Training Agency                       |
| INSET     | In-Service Education of Teachers                                 |
| IT        | Information Technology                                           |
| ITB       | Industrial Training Board                                        |
| ITeC      | Information Technology Centre                                    |
| JBPVE     | Joint Board for Pre-Vocational Education                         |
| LEA       | Local Education Authority                                        |
| LQI       | Local Quality Initiative                                         |
| MainFrame | Modular training framework                                       |
| MDF       | Mutual Development Fund                                          |
| MSC       | Manpower Services Commission (now the Training Agency)           |
| NAFE      | Non-Advanced Further Education                                   |
| NATFHE    | National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education |
| NCVQ      | National Council for Vocational Qualifications                   |
| NROVA     | National Record of Vocational Achievement                        |
| NTI       | National Training Initiative                                     |
| NVQ       | National Vocational Qualification                                |
| PAFD      | Permanent Additional Funding for the Disabled                    |
| PEI       | Personal Effectiveness Inventory                                 |
| PICKUP    | Professional, Industrial and Commercial Updating                 |
| ROTA      | Review of Training Arrangements                                  |
| RSA       | Royal Society of Arts                                            |
| RTITB     | Road Transport Industry Training Board                           |
| RVQ       | Review of Vocational Qualifications                              |
| SCOTVEC   | Scottish Vocational Education Council                            |
| TEC       | Training and Enterprise Council                                  |
| TOC       | Training and Occupations Classification                          |
| TSAS      | Training Standards Advisory Service                              |
| TUC       | Trades Union Congress                                            |
| TVEI      | Technical and Vocational Education Initiative                    |
| VET       | Vocational Education and Training                                |

|        |                                                |
|--------|------------------------------------------------|
| WEEP   | Work Experience on Employers' Premises         |
| WRFE   | Work-Related Further Education                 |
| WRNAFE | Work-Related Non-Advanced Further<br>Education |
| YOP    | Youth Opportunities Programme                  |
| YTS    | Youth Training Scheme                          |

## EVALUATION OF THE LEA COLLABORATION

FEU has always been anxious that the quality of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) should be the highest. Although the Training Agency, formerly the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), has not defined the role of further education (FE) in the provision of off-the-job training, FEU has encouraged FE colleges to negotiate the best possible educational component. In May 1983, FEU published *Supporting YTS* to provide guidance for colleges and others involved in YTS. This manual has been revised twice to take account of developments — in May 1984 and again in May 1985. This demonstrates FEU's encouragement of the FE sector to continue to participate fully in YTS, to demand a say in the design and quality of the schemes to ensure that genuine progression from YTS can be achieved, and that the opportunity for obtaining appropriate vocational qualifications is provided. The third edition also stressed the importance of evaluation in ensuring quality provision. This manual has been subject to extensive revisions to take account of the development of two-year YTS and has been published as *Supporting Quality in YTS*.

FEU has been supporting the development of a quality YTS in other general ways. For example, it has given advice and guidance on vocational preparation, teaching skills, the use of profiles, assessment using competence-based procedures, including assessment of a work-based competence, the development of core skills, the meeting of special educational and training needs, equal opportunities, and progression.<sup>1</sup> It is also concerned to monitor and support the development of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) through the National Council of Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ).

In addition, FEU has concern for supporting the development of the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE)<sup>2</sup>. An important development within this has been the use of CPVE within YTS. A pilot study of this 'alternative route', a work-based variant, to CPVE sought to test the delivery of CPVE within YTS, with special reference to the CPVE core, vocational achievements and methods of assessment, and to test how far CPVE contributes to the delivery of the four outcomes of YTS:

- occupational competence;
- core skills;
- ability to transfer skills and knowledge;
- personal effectiveness.

<sup>1</sup> See especially the following FEU publications: *Vocational Preparation* (1981), *Tutoring* (Longman for FEU, 1982), *Basic Skills* (1982), *Teaching Skills: Staff Development for Vocational Preparation* (Longman for FEU, 1983), *Profiles in Action* (Longman for FEU, 1984), *Common Core: Teaching and Learning* (Longman for FEU, 1984), *Assessment, Quality and Competence* (Longman for FEU, 1985), *Competency-Based Vocational Education* (1987), *Relevance, Flexibility and Competence* (1987).

<sup>2</sup> See the following FEU publications: *Preparing for CPVE* (1985), *CPVE in Action* (1985), *Aspects of CPVE* (1986), and *CPVE Bulletins*, nos. 1-16.

The report concluded that 'there appears to be no ultimate incompatibility between CPVE and YTS criteria and outcomes'.<sup>3</sup>

FEU has supported other research of direct relevance for the development of a quality YTS. For example, *Converting Working into Learning* (Longman for FEU, November 1985) is an appraisal of an LEA vocational preparation scheme which provided training for over 500 trainees each year since 1982 and was serving as a pilot for one-year YTS. This report describes the way the project, administered by Bedfordshire LEA, was run, the processes of initial assessment, the characteristics and needs of the trainees, the perceptions and attitudes of employers and workplace supervisors, the training of agency staff, and the processes developed for ensuring integration between on- and off-the-job training. The design of applied work-based training units represented an attempt to create 'an instrument for converting working into learning', the development of a competence-based modular system, supervisor training schemes, and a confirmation of the essential role of counselling through the appointment of liaison officers. This project was subsumed into an LEA-managed YTS and provided the foundation for an LEA collaborative project which has been the focus of an FEU evaluation project (RP394).

The FEU project evaluated the collaborative development of a two-year YTS in three LEAs — Bedfordshire, Sheffield and Haringey — over a two-year period (January 1987 to December 1988). During the evaluation the three LEAs were joined by a fourth — Liverpool — and the Wirral Metropolitan College, and adopted the name MainFrame — a Modular Training Framework.

#### TYPES OF EVALUATION

Typically, evaluation research is characterised by three main types:

- external evaluation;
- collaborative or network evaluation;
- internal or self-evaluation.

*External evaluation* — such as that carried out by the Training Agency — is a traditional approach to monitoring and evaluation, characterised by 'outsiders looking in', often with a view to reporting at the end of a set period on the effectiveness and efficiency of a project or programme, and is often used to justify the expenditure of resources.

*Collaborative or network evaluation* may enable a number of organisations or institutions to work together to evaluate a common programme, project or scheme, perhaps sharing the evaluation tasks or pooling resources to enable one person to co-ordinate the evaluation across the network.

The third type of evaluation is internal or self-evaluation by YTS providers, which is organisational or institution based, usually formative, and carried out for its own development and feedback

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<sup>3</sup> 1985-86 CPVE Alternative Route Final Report, JBPVE, January 1987

rather than accountability to an outside body. Self-evaluation can be very time-consuming in terms of staff time and energy and the form it takes; the approach it adopts will inevitably reflect resources available for this task. Since staff on YTS programmes are usually kept very busy, the managing agency will need to make a commitment to monitoring and evaluation, to demonstrate their understanding of its importance, by devoting more than token resources to it. Staff in the agency will need to feel sympathetic to the purpose of self-evaluation and not confuse it with staff appraisal processes.

Agency managers, liaison officers, co-ordinators, tutors and supervisors may find the FEU RP394 evaluation checklist (see Appendix 1) an appropriate basis for YTS collaborative or self-evaluation. It is based on the main principles that should underlie the design framework for a two-year YTS.

Seriously planned and mounted evaluation activities, whether by outsiders or colleagues, should be welcomed by staff involved in YTS when these conditions are met:

- All staff involved are consulted and their consent obtained for visits, observations, interviews and testing.
- The identities of organisations and individuals are not publicised without permission.
- Trainee assessment grades or competence achievement level profiles should not be used in ways prejudicial to the development of special YTS provision, e.g. recruiting high proportions of special needs trainees (i.e. local variations and responses to particular local needs must be taken into account in any quantitative analysis).
- Agency staff should have the right to suggest additional topics and methods for the evaluation, and negotiate with evaluators ways of including some of these.
- Feedback from the evaluation or written reports should be presented to those involved in the scheme that has been evaluated, for their comments, before being made more publicly available.

#### **TRAINING AGENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring and evaluation is now a requirement if managing agents are to get Approved Training Organisation (ATO) status and meet the continued requirements of the Training Agency's Training Standards Advisory Service (TSAS). ATOs must set up their own effective programme review mechanisms and evaluate their own performance with the Training Agency local offices. The reasons for undertaking such self-evaluation often include:

- to ensure they are meeting the four outcomes of two-year YTS;
- to clarify aims and objectives and set them in priority order;
- to identify and construct indicators of successful outcomes over specified time-periods;
- to identify indicators for comparison between YTS achievements in various parts of the scheme;



- to give consideration to contextual features of planning, design and delivery which may influence the outcomes, and make allowances for these in the appraisal of performance;
- to consider whether the organisational and administrative arrangements are the most effective;
- to encourage trainees to feel they have some say in the running of the scheme;
- to motivate staff by feeding back positive features of their performance, and to identify weaknesses that can be diminished through appropriate staff development programmes;
- to provide an analytical framework within which to discuss future changes in organisation, aims and strategies of the agency or institution.

The Training Agency's view:

ATOs need to have methods of checking that the training programme is actually being delivered as they intended, and that trainees are achieving the competence objectives set out in it. This process of quality assurance ensures that the commitments made to trainees, employers and the MSC [now the Training Agency] are met. Programme review needs to be backed up by methods for gathering information about the operation of the programme.<sup>4</sup>

Essentially, all ATOs are expected to develop procedures which review the achievements of trainees on their programmes in the four YTS outcomes (effectiveness, or the extent to which organisational objectives are achieved) and the use of resources (efficiency, or the relationship between inputs and outputs). These procedures are not an end in themselves, but the means of assessing strengths and weaknesses in schemes and programmes so that improvements can be made through a rolling development plan.

The Training Agency has set out what effective programme reviews should aim to achieve:

- monitor the quality of training experienced by young people;
- identify weaknesses in the training and opportunities for improving it;
- identify good practice and developments within and outside the organisation, from which training can benefit;
- build this information into a forward plan for developing the training programme.

#### AIMS OF THE EVALUATION

In the context of the demands placed on the MainFrame project by the Training Agency, and by their own agreed aims and objectives, the FEU evaluation has focused on:

- the contribution of LEA management and support in implementing YTS programmes and in liaising with other

<sup>4</sup> *Developing Effective Programme Review*, MSC, November 1987



LEAs to establish a support network for the design and delivery of YTS programmes;

- the overall framework and design of modules and individuals' training programmes;
- the implementation of the programme by various providers, in a wide variety of schemes, across a range of vocational sectors;
- accreditation issues, techniques of moderation, and negotiation with validating bodies and the Youth Certificate Board;
- the way in which local modular programmes are accepted by national award giving bodies.

#### OBJECTIVES

In fulfilling the objectives of the FEU evaluation, the project set out to:

- report back on developments within the collaborative project;
- focus on progress made on weaknesses identified as the evaluation proceeded;
- examine specifically:
  - curriculum design in meeting individual and special needs of trainees,
  - equal opportunities,
  - trainee participation in design and assessment of their training programmes,
  - destination of trainees upon leaving YTS, whether early or not,
  - exit qualifications and levels of competence of YTS leavers,
  - the role of liaison officers in the delivery of YTS programmes in the three authorities,
  - the effect of traditional patterns of organisation and concomitant attitudes in NAFE on the delivery of off-the-job training, and whether colleges respond in a significantly different way to the LEA managing agent than to others for whom they provide off-the-job training,
  - the transferability of the collaborative project's delivery structure and system to other LEAs as ATOs and other training providers within YTS, and beyond into other areas of NAFE and other national schemes such as Employment Training (ET).

The FEU evaluation was intended to be formative and supportive, running concurrently with the development of the collaborative project. Close co-operation between FEU and the local evaluation teams ensured a responsive and constructive use of feedback of the findings, and this in itself constituted part of the evaluation. FEU evaluation drew on 'hard' data, such as enrolment and recruitment statistics, programme specifications, competence criteria, credit recognition and the measurement of the four outcomes. It also included 'soft' data such as the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of participants in the schemes, from managers to trainees; the views of employers, supervisors, off-the-job training providers, and external bodies such as the careers service, the Training Agency and national accreditation

bodies such as C&G and NCVQ. The sources of data for the FEU evaluation, guided by the checklist of research questions in Appendix 1, are:

- employers' surveys;
- college and scheme staff surveys;
- trainee surveys, case studies and leavers surveys;
- liaison officer survey;
- verification seminars with Training Agency, careers services and LEA/agency management;
- statistical sources;
- other sources of data, such as observation.

#### **MAINFRAME AND FEU EVALUATION**

Although it would appear that the FEU evaluation of MainFrame should be characterised as external evaluation, in fact it displayed the features of collaborative evaluation, but one which encouraged self-evaluation. The research was undertaken by at least one member of each collaborating LEA and the FEU project evaluation officer. The team met frequently and were responsible for planning the research, designing the research instruments, and sharing in the administration of the questionnaires. The analysis and report writing was largely carried through by the FEU project evaluation, although each LEA was encouraged to produce a summary of the findings for their own managing agent. Indeed, it was an implicit aim of the evaluation that each partner would continue the evaluation procedures established in conjunction with the FEU's central evaluation, which required the local evaluation to articulate with the central evaluation.

The evaluation was characterised by action research, i.e. its primary aim was not to measure performance against Training Agency criteria or FEU checklists but in terms of its own objectives, and was intended to assist the project develop its practice to achieve those aims. Contrary to conventional research practice, the evaluator did not remain detached and objective but worked closely with the collaborating authorities. This final summative report is probably not as useful to them as the continuous feeding back of findings, but it may be used to support policy decisions, legitimise a claim for resources, demonstrate achievement of objectives, or satisfy those to whom they are accountable. The involvement of local programme development officers in all stages of the research, including data collection and dissemination of findings, has facilitated any necessary changes to improve performance. The research may therefore be characterised as reactive evaluation insofar as it has set out to influence its subject of study.

#### **RESPONSES TO EVALUATION FINDINGS**

Throughout this report, reference will be made to the positive ways in which the MainFrame project responded to FEU evaluation findings. Particular areas which received immediate and constructive attention were:

- a review of its modular curriculum;

- measures for assessment of personal effectiveness and core skills;
- the issue of integration between on- and off-the-job training;
- staff development.

#### CONTEXTUALISING THE FINDINGS

In examining the findings of this evaluation, readers are asked to note a number of points about the collaborative project:

1. The collaborating authorities are engaged in a unique developmental project, committed to providing YTS through a modular framework. The emphasis on modularisation is a key issue with the MainFrame project and is at the frontier of curriculum development in YTS. The objectives go well beyond the minimum specified by the Training Agency for managing agencies wishing to attain Approved Training Organisation (ATO) status. The evaluation has attempted to chart their progress not only against Training Agency and FEU criteria, but also against their own high ambitions.
2. The limits of the evaluation framework made it difficult to disentangle general issues that would relate to any two-year YTS programme and those specific to the three collaborating agencies. Thus, some of the criticisms levelled at the collaborative project are rooted in the more general critique of the Training Agency's design for a two-year YTS. For example, the Training Agency's design framework made an analytic distinction between on- and off-the-job training and core and vocational skills, which in practice was hard to sustain. The Training Agency then demanded that the training and skills were integrated. In practice it is easier to consider training in a holistic way, and the analytic separation produces an artificial problem. Thus, if integration is a problem for the collaborative project, then it is for all YTS managing agencies because of the way it has been conceived.
3. The LEA managing agencies have unique and particular features in addition to their relationship with off-the-job providers, which make them atypical of other YTS managing agencies. To begin with, each of the four LEA managing agents (leaving the Wirral Metropolitan College for the moment) have a complex organisational structure that has had to be developed in the collaborating authorities to enable them to deliver YTS to a large number of trainees. In each of the four areas, the LEA managing agents are the largest providers. Moreover, in two agencies, the development of the organisational structure in the centralisation of YTS administration and/or delivery within the local authority provision required the removal of the autonomy of FE colleges and LEA-supported schemes which previously ran their own YTS programmes. The legacy of this rationalisation and centralisation remains.
4. Not only are the collaborating LEA managing agencies the largest providers in their areas, but they are multi-providers in that they attempt to provide training across a large

number of occupational sectors, without specialisation. Between them, the three LEAs cover most of the TOCs. The majority of YTS managing agents will have limited themselves to specialise in particular occupational areas, or a small range of (usually related) occupations. This is a significant factor in the design and delivery of training programmes that must be taken into account. In other words, it is not just the size but the range and scope of the collaborating YTS agencies that needs to be borne in mind.

5. The collaborating agencies' commitment to tailoring training programmes to meet individual training needs, regardless of gender, race, disability or other special training needs, again places it at the forefront of the development of a quality YTS. The issues in providing training programmes for a carefully selected, homogeneous group of trainees who have clear career intentions in advance of joining the YTS are rather different to meeting the needs of a heterogeneous group who have been accepted through open entry. Again, the collaborating authorities' commitment to equal opportunities, and the provision of programmes for trainees with special needs, goes well beyond the minimum required by the Training Agency.
6. The strategy employed to carry out this programme is the development of a modular framework of training which is not only of internal value for the design and delivery of the training programmes of each trainee, but is seeking to lead the way as a unit credit accumulation and transfer system which will articulate with national developments in terms of certification and assessment. Indeed, it is possible to envisage the broader ramifications of the successful development of such a framework beyond YTS into other areas of work-related further and adult education, including ET, particularly since it has emphases on competency-based vocational education and the development of work-based assessment.
7. It should be stressed that the FEU evaluation of the collaborative project has been characterised as action research. The objectives of the research were not merely to produce interim and final reports, but to immediately feed back findings that emerged to the collaborating agencies as their project developed. Thus, the idea behind evaluation was not merely to inform the wider world of the progress and success of this innovatory project within YTS, but an integral part of the development of the project.
8. Over the two years of the evaluation there have been some significant developments within the FE sector which were not necessarily anticipated in the project design but have to be taken into account. In producing its development plan, MainFrame has taken account of four key factors which will dominate VET over the next three years:
  - the government White Paper, *Employment in the 1990s*;
  - continuing developments within the framework of the New Training Initiative (NTI);

- ERA;
- the Single European Market in 1992.

Each of these will exercise a powerful influence over the shape of vocational education and training; MainFrame is developing structures and strategies to encompass these over the next three years.

These are some of the contextual features of the collaborative project to be borne in mind when reading this document. While the project has yet to achieve its own high expectations, the goals it has set itself ensure that the agencies have gone well beyond the minimum Training Agency requirements, to the extent that all three authorities have been granted full ATO status. The evaluation shows that within the collaborative project there is genuine concern for further development, the maintenance of quality and the avoidance of complacency. Its invitation to the FEU to evaluate its development is testimony to this commitment.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This document is the distillation of the key points to emerge from the two-year evaluation of the MainFrame project. It is based on the FEU final report for the project, but aims to widen the discussion on some vital issues beyond the collaborating partners and YTS itself while seeking to disseminate the nature and practices of the project. Although the focus has been on LEA-managed design and delivery of two-year YTS, it will be seen that these lessons go beyond YTS as the modular credit accumulation framework is embedded more widely in work-related further education (WRFE) in the collaborating LEAs, and is the basis for developments in customised training packages in the public and private sectors.

To present this selection of key issues, the framework for this document follows that successfully used in other FEU publications<sup>5</sup>. The curriculum development model is presented schematically in Figure 1. Accordingly, this section has outlined the aims and objectives of monitoring and evaluation.

Subsequent sections of this report focus on:

- Needs Analysis (Section 2)
- Programme Design (Section 3)
- Implementation (Section 4)
- Management and Organisation (Section 5)

#### SUMMARY

##### Section 2: Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is the matching of identified needs to policy priorities which emanate from within LEAs or are imposed from outside. The introduction of YTS was a response to a perceived need for quality training provision for school leavers at a time of high and increasing youth unemployment. This in itself created needs for LEAs to respond to government policies, combined with a response to perceived local employer needs — a traditional

<sup>5</sup> A full discussion of the curriculum development model and how it relates to policy and planning (in the context of staff development) is given in *Planning Staff Development: A Guide for Managers*, FEU, 1987.

task of FE. Accordingly, this section outlines the introduction of YTS, subsequent changes and developments, and the response of the FE sector.

Set in context, the development of the collaborative project — MainFrame — is outlined, emphasising the advantages of collaboration in curriculum development, but with a consideration of some of the 'costs' of such joint work.

### **Section 3: Programme Design**

MainFrame is essentially a curriculum development project, built around a commitment to a competency-based, modular credit accumulation programme. This section considers the background to the trend towards modularisation, emphasises trainee-centred and negotiated curricula, access and curriculum entitlement, and focuses on the issue of integration in the MainFrame modular system. The methodology employed for the derivation of a competence-based programme and associated assessment considerations, particularly in the light of the development of NVQs, are examined in this section.

### **Section 4: Implementation**

Having examined the theory behind the MainFrame modular system, this section proceeds to evaluate how it operates in practice. Beginning with a look at the delivery of programmes and the different learning and teaching styles entailed, the development of modules are subject to scrutiny. An increasingly important aspect of trainee-centred, individualised or customised training programmes is the emphasis on initial assessment, action plans and subsequent guidance and support. In terms of assessment and its relationship to NCVQ and nationally preferred schemes, the central issues are those of standardisation, credit accumulation and credit transfer, and progression beyond YTS. The key issue of integration will be discussed in this section.

### **Section 5: Management and Organisation**

In order to deliver the MainFrame credit accumulation scheme, LEAs as managing agents have had to reconsider the organisation of existing YTS and other WRFE provision. As the FEU evaluation discovered, the MainFrame system is complex and sophisticated, requiring a good deal of institutional support to be effective. Such support needs to come from senior LEA management, particularly if the most effective use of college-based off-the-job training is to be made. A critical role in the MainFrame system is that of the liaison officer. Liaison officers in two of the collaborating authorities act as 'learning managers' — a unique role within the LEA educational system, being more than work placement officers but not college lecturers. Being a new role, liaison officers have required a good deal of staff development, but this is also necessary for all those involved in the design and delivery of a modular credit accumulation

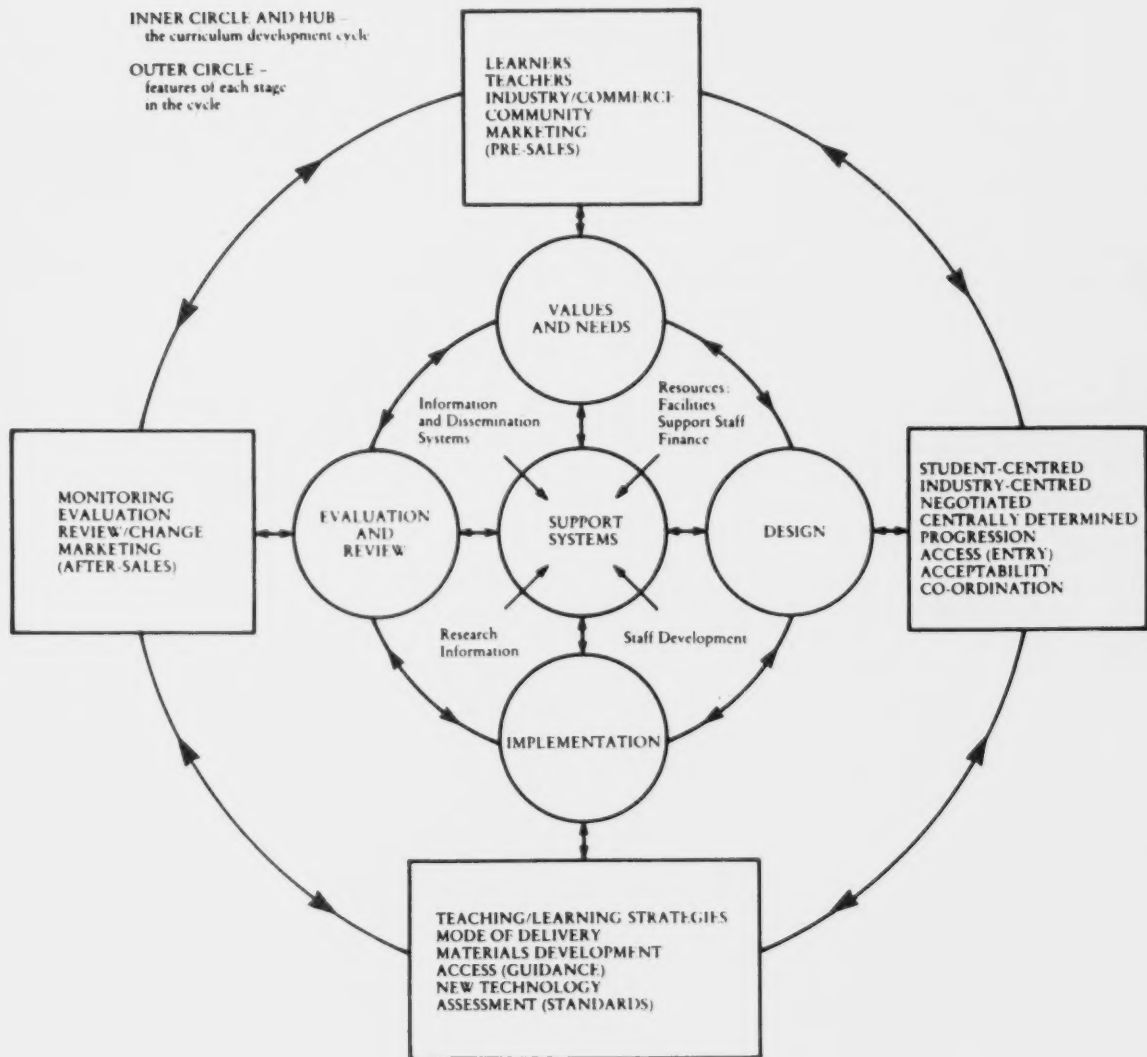


programme. The final section will pay attention to staff development needs and the management process.

### Section 6: Summary

The major lessons of the FEU evaluation are summarised in the context of possible future developments envisaged by the MainFrame project.

FIGURE 1: FEU MODEL OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT





## 2. NEEDS ANALYSIS

### THE YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

Two-year YTS was introduced in April 1986 following publication of the then Manpower Service Commission's report, *Development of the Youth Training Scheme* (The Reay Report). This recommended the extension of YTS from one to two years and the incorporation of several new features including a greater emphasis on quality assurance and increased opportunities for trainees to work towards vocational qualifications.

YTS had been developed as part of the NTI in May 1981, which originated from the MSC. This proposed three national objectives as the basis for developing training in the 1980s:

- modernisation of training in occupational skills, including apprenticeship; in particular, introducing reliance on objective standards;
- moving towards a position where all young people under the age of 18 have the opportunity to either continue in full-time education or enter work-related training, including planned work experience;
- wider opportunities for adults, employed or unemployed, to acquire, increase or update their skills.

After a period of consultation, MSC produced its report, *A New Training Initiative: An Agenda for Action*, in December 1981 which, along with the simultaneous publication of a White Paper from the Department of Employment, *A New Training Initiative: A Programme for Action*, reaffirmed the three principles of NTI and made many recommendations, including:

- the establishment of vocational preparation arrangements covering all young people entering the labour market and not just those without work;
- the immediate setting up of a high-level task group to include CBI, TUC, education interests and others to suggest how this might be achieved;
- the introduction of a new YTS from September 1983, which would guarantee up to one year's foundation training for all unemployed 16-year-old school leavers.

This new scheme aimed to provide all participants with a better start in working and adult life through an integrated programme of training, education and work experience. It was also designed to give employers a better equipped, flexible, adaptable workforce able to cope with change, which had acquired some competence and practical experience in a range of skills.

The delivery of the programme was to be through approved managing agents. Entering into an agreement with the MSC to provide training programmes, they were required to supervise and co-ordinate the provision, ensuring that all the design features are included in each trainee's programme.

Training programmes were initially designed to be carried out through one year and cover the following curriculum design elements:

- induction;
- assessment;
- planned work experience;
- work-based training;
- off-the-job training and education;
- core areas;
- guidance and support;
- record and review of progress and achievement.

In 1985-86 the MSC proposed a revised and simplified design framework which emphasised training inputs and trainee achievements or outcomes. This was not a change in direction or intention, but a statement of clarification of the underlying philosophy of YTS, consistent with the aims stated in the *Youth Task Group Report* published by the MSC in 1982. YTS then contained the following design elements:

### **Inputs**

- planned work experience on-the-job;
- off-the-job training/education;
- induction;
- initial assessment;
- participative learning.

### **Outcomes**

- competencies in a job and/or range of occupational skills;
- competence in a range of transferable skills;
- ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations;
- personal effectiveness.

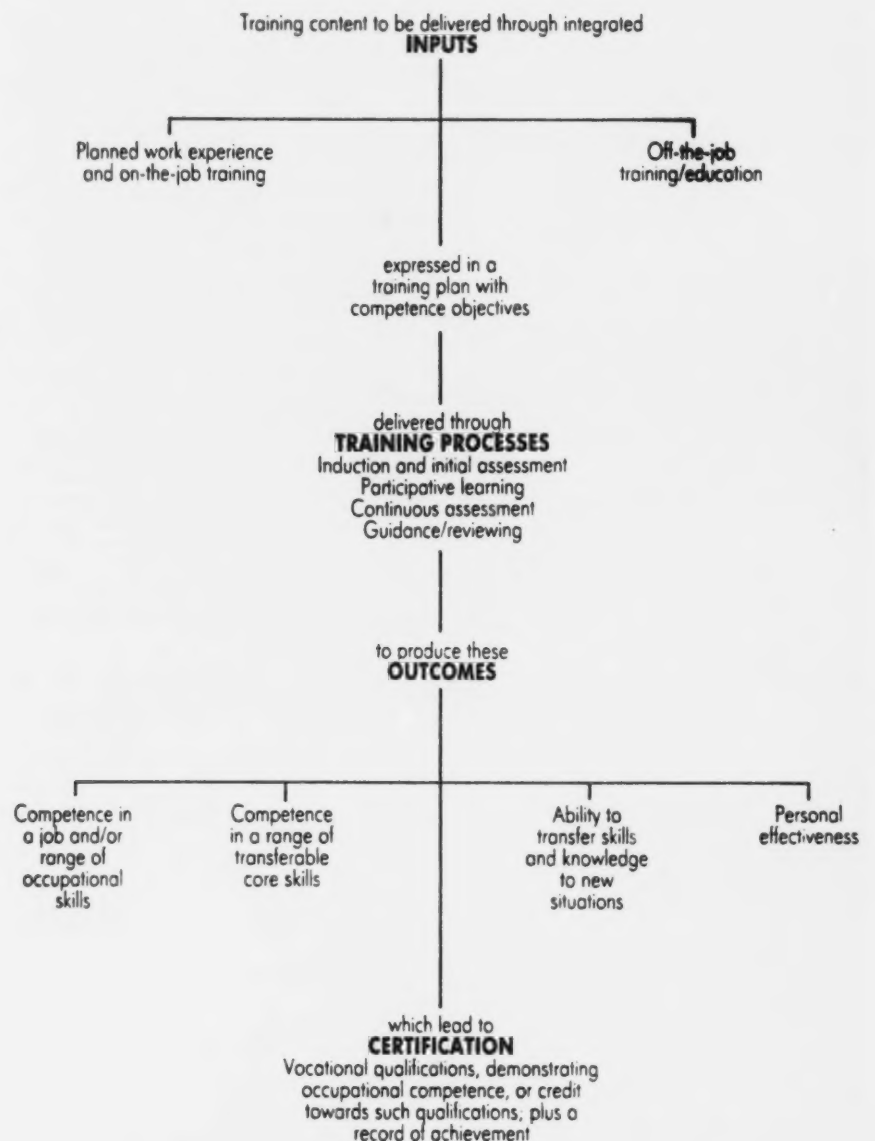
When YTS was extended to two years in 1986, the design framework was modified again, as given in Figure 2. This chart outlines the main principles which should underlie all YTS programmes. It continued to stress the two inputs of planned work experience and on-the-job training, and off-the-job training experience, and the four outcomes (competences and abilities that trainees should acquire) which, taken together, make up occupational competence. Competences, when achieved by trainees, should be recognised through certification involving vocational qualifications. This design has provided a useful and desirable curriculum framework for MainFrame and its future work.

The main changes introduced by two-year YTS were:

- increased concern for health and safety;
- increased emphasis on vocational qualifications;
- increased emphasis on integration;
- increased emphasis on equal opportunities;
- changes in funding arrangements;
- increased emphasis on quality control.

This was the model in operation during the period of evaluation of the MainFrame project. However, towards the end of the evaluation, as a response to demographic changes (that is, falling numbers of young people reaching school age combined with an upward turn in the recruitment of young people straight from school), the Training Agency proposed new changes in YTS to ensure its continuing viability. Essentially it reiterated the two

FIGURE 2: DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR TWO-YEAR YTS



Source: *Development of the Youth Training Scheme*, MSC, July 1985

objectives of NTI and reminded managing agents of the second one — that all young people should have the opportunity to experience education or vocational education/training between the ages of 16 and 18, regardless of whether they make the immediate transition from school to work. As a result, the emphasis on taking on trainees with employee status has been heightened, but there is also renewed concern about the flexibility of the YTS design framework, particularly in the light of the effects of the government White Paper on *Employment in the 1990s*.

While the stress on meeting the four outcomes is maintained, their assessment and recording will change, with managing agents required to use the National Record of Vocational

Achievement (NROVA) in place of Training Agency certification procedures. This has been envisaged for some time by the Training Agency, working closely with NCVQ, and will facilitate credit accumulation.

Another proposal is for a more flexible interpretation of off-the-job training. Insistence on a minimum of 20 weeks' off-the-job training is maintained, but more flexible notions of off-the-job training, including more emphasis on work-based off-the-job training and open learning, have been introduced. This will have significant implications for the FE sector which, in spite of competition from the private sector, has managed to maintain a strong position in the provision of YTS training.

#### THE RESPONSE OF FE

The specification of a minimum period of off-the-job training within two-year YTS created a sense of ambivalence among FE providers, being a potential threat to the traditions of FE and an opportunity for it to test its responsiveness and flexibility. There was initially some resistance to the undertaking of MSC-sponsored programmes among some FE colleges, either for political reasons or through lack of interest. Others took the opportunity to respond to a wider range of needs and interests, increasing access into FE. The 1985 Post-16 Network National Conference recommended that LEAs should include YTS provision within their three-year development plans and annual programmes, and should publicly state and actively encourage colleges to seek involvement in two-year YTS.<sup>1</sup>

Many colleges had already responded to one-year YTS, mainly by acting as Mode B2 providers, but also as the site for off-the-job training for a number of Mode A schemes. Such involvement had an impact on the FE service:

- FE received direct government funding rather than LEA finance.
- There was a shift in control of vocational education from the FE sector and the DES towards employers, employer-led agencies and the MSC/Training Agency.
- Colleges came into direct competition with other organisations for education and training contracts.
- Schemes brought a wider range of young people, in terms of attributes, motivations and needs, into FE colleges.
- There was increased curricular provision for students of lower-than-average ability and those with learning difficulties.
- There was a move away from nationally examined subjects to programmes geared towards individuals and local conditions.
- Increased attention was paid to a young person's personal development and coping skills.
- YTS caused colleges to look inwards at their own need to reorganise their structures, communication networks and staff

<sup>1</sup> Further Education Staff College, 'Developments in Post-16 Education and Training', *Coombe Lodge Report*, vol. 18, no. 7, 1985, p. 384.

development, as well as introducing 'student-centred' teaching and assessment approaches.

- Colleges also had to look outwards at the needs of local employers and the community at large, making use of labour market intelligence.
- The relevance, flexibility and responsiveness of FE colleges was been challenged.
- More attention was paid to marketing, the development of an objectives-led programme design, concerns for cost-effectiveness, and monitoring and evaluation.

When YTS was set up, three schemes were operated. *Mode A* schemes were those in which a managing agent took responsibility for the design and delivery of a complete programme for a group of trainees; an employer agency, consortium or local authority could operate as the managing agent and use others to provide the work-based experience and off-the-job elements. The majority of YTS trainees were on *Mode A* schemes. In *Mode B1* schemes the MSC funded a variety of sponsors, including training workshops, community projects and information technology centres (ITeCs), to promote a YTS programme. For *Mode B2* schemes, the MSC acted as managing agent but subcontracted elements of the programme to various agencies to deliver YTS on its behalf ('linked' schemes). Many colleges of FE ran *Mode B2* schemes, organising the overall programme, providing off-the-job training and education, and arranging placements with work-experience providers. With the extension to two years, these labels were disused and funding shifted to being based on the status of the trainee. Managing agents received a basic grant for each trainee; an additional premium grant was payable in certain cases. Premium places were intended to meet the needs of young people who required work experience away from the pressures of the industrial or commercial world, or who needed additional training where employer-based training would not suffice, for example in information technology (IT). These were trainees who would have been on *Mode B1* schemes previously. Trainees with special educational or training needs could attract permanent additional funding (PAFD) in order that managing agents could provide high quality specialised training. Such trainees were typically endorsed by a specialist careers or disablement resettlement officer. These additional funds enabled managing agents to increase staff support and overcome placement difficulties so that programmes could be developed to meet permanent needs as part of the normal planning process. Alternatively, individual programmes could be developed when required. The funding arrangements for YTS were subject to a review in 1988, and changes were implemented in April 1989.

#### MAINFRAME

Three significantly different LEAs — Bedfordshire, Haringey and Sheffield — have been collaborating since November 1985 to develop a two-year YTS. Bedfordshire is a shire county with a population of about half-a-million and a mixed economy. The northern area around the county town of Bedford is mainly rural, with many people employed in sectors associated with agriculture, while the south has an industrial base around Luton and Dunstable. Unemployment is around 7% for men and 3% for women, although this is unevenly spread. The county is characterised by a high proportion of ethnic minority groups; the distinctive feature is the wide range of different ethnic minority groups. At the beginning of this evaluation there were, in any one year, approximately 3,500 YTS places in the county. The LEA's Bedfordshire Youth Training Group (BYTG) was the largest, handling nearly 1,000 of the places across most

occupational areas, a high percentage being employer-based. Now the overall numbers have been cut back to around 3,000 and BYTG has an allocation of around 700 places. The county has two FE and two higher education institutions; in addition, there is an agricultural college which has recently been transferred to the Cranfield Institute of Technology for administration.

Haringey is an inner London borough with a population of about 200,000. The Department of the Environment has described it as one of the most disadvantaged local authorities in the country. Like Bedfordshire, the borough has a cosmopolitan population, with some 85 different ethnic groups represented in the 1981 census returns. It suffers one of the highest rates of unemployment, especially among young people of whom nearly one third are currently registered as unemployed. The LEA has set up its own managing agency, the Haringey Education Service Training Agency (HESTA), to provide YTS in the borough, and is the only managing agent in the borough of any significant size, offering places for over 250 trainees. The borough has two colleges; HESTA operates a training workshop and an ITeC, as well as offering employer-based provision.

Sheffield is a city of over half-a-million people severely affected by the decline in industrial manufacturing. Unemployment is high, and in some parts of the city youth unemployment is as much as 40%. Each year approximately 6,000 pupils leave school. The LEA's managing agency, Sheffield Hallmark, the largest of about 80 managing agents that operate in the Sheffield/Rotherham area, intends to provide for about 1,700 trainees each year. Hallmark consists of ten partners — the five FE colleges, three community/training workshop projects and an ITeC, and the central co-ordinating agency, Hallmark, itself.

In 1987, MainFrame was extended to include a fourth LEA — Liverpool — and by September 1988 had been joined by the Wirral Metropolitan College. The main focus of the FEU evaluation was on the three original LEAs, although case studies of Liverpool and the Wirral Metropolitan College were useful for evaluating the transferability of the collaborative model of modular credit transfer (see Boxes 1 and 2, pages 18 - 20).



## Box 1 LIVERPOOL LEA

Liverpool Education Authority has had a strong commitment to the young unemployed and has participated in many initiatives to support them. The LEA has been involved in many of the programmes funded by the MSC Training Agency. This has primarily been through the FE colleges which were all substantially involved in the YOP programmes. The colleges took a strong initiative on the YTS programme, with little intervention from the LEA. This resulted in a rather uncoordinated response to YTS, with different systems and practices developing in terms of:

- administrative procedures;
- frequency and systems for workplace monitoring;
- widely differing periods of off-the-job training between colleges for identical programmes;
- growing competition between colleges in an increasingly competitive sector.

Re-organisation of the LEA's eight colleges into four in 1986 had little impact on the operation of YTS programmes. However, colleges were increasingly finding that trainees chose and remained in a particular vocational area throughout their YTS programme; that progression to FE beyond YTS was not assisted by colleges providing vocational programmes for which there were no supporting higher level programmes to allow continuity of training; and that the full ability range was not being catered for through YTS.

The move to two-year YTS and the funding changes highlighted a number of these issues in a context which was increasingly conscious of the need to use resources more effectively. The inefficient use of resources on YTS in the FE service; the disparate and cumbersome administrative systems employed; and in many cases poor occupancy in particular vocational sectors offered meant that the YTS programmes relied heavily on the LEA for financial subsidy. In addition, quality was not even across the programmes offered in the LEA, there was no discrete staff development programmes available, and there was poor representation of ethnic minorities on all programmes and of young women in non-traditional areas. Further, teachers were responsible for teaching, monitoring work experience and much of the associated administration running across an extended college year. This inevitably produced a considerable burden of work compared with colleagues working in the 'mainstream'.

Good practice had evolved in some centres, particularly in the monitoring of work experience with an emphasis on personal guidance and support for trainees, and excellent relationships between colleges and employers. Integration between on- and off-the-job training was facilitated using college tutors for the monitoring of work experience. In this way, curriculum content, training plans and assessment procedures complemented the reality of work using the workplace as a resource to inform training. However, credit for trainees learning at work was reflected only through the YTS certificate, and assessment of skills and knowledge acquired at work was not coherent and rigorous as it might have been. Further, despite the fact that the college training reflected the work being done by the trainee in the work placement, this was not credited in the nationally recognised certification used.

All colleges obtained ATO status, though a number of structural and qualitative issues still clearly needed to be addressed to:

- ensure co-ordination across the institutions offering YTS;
- operate more efficiently and effectively;
- cater for the whole ability range;
- encourage progression to a range of higher level qualifications;
- develop a coherent assessment system for both on- and off-the-job training;
- address issues of equality of opportunity on a more coherent basis;
- provide coherence across programmes in the 14-18 age sector (TVEI, CPVE and 'mainstream' programmes);
- address the impending requirements of NVQs, industry lead bodies and preferred schemes;
- devise strategies to accommodate demographic trends.

In this context, the possibility of becoming a partner in the Bedfordshire-Haringey-Sheffield collaborative project (later to become MainFrame) became available. The changes required to introduce MainFrame systems provided an opportunity to address the issues outlined above.

The major obstacles to implementing MainFrame and collaboration were the lack of a central organising unit in Liverpool LEA's YTS provision, the lack of common systems and the cumbersome administrative procedures employed to operate YTS across four centres. In terms of MainFrame, the main obstacles were that some vocational areas offered in Liverpool were not currently available in Bedfordshire, Haringey or Sheffield, and consequently there were no appropriate modules for those occupational sectors. Work had to be rapidly undertaken to produce DACUM-derived modules, particularly in retailing, warehouse work, freight forwarding, and travel and tourism. In addition, there was considerable criticism of the format of the modules which were perceived as over-complicated and unattractive. There were also reservations about the appropriateness of some of the language used to describe competences, particularly where modules were to be used with special needs trainees. Also, it was felt that the impact of modules on the delivery of off-the-job training had not been directly addressed within MainFrame and that Liverpool had the opportunity to clarify these issues.

It was, consequently, felt that the YTS programme should be co-ordinated and administered centrally by the LEA rather than the four colleges, but delivered by the colleges. It was also recommended that liaison officers be appointed who could play a valuable role as advocates on behalf of trainees and a consistent link with employers and placement providers across college programmes, and relieve some of the pressure that tutors were experiencing. It was also felt to be critical that everyone currently involved in YTS should be consulted about the implementation and kept informed and supported through a planned programme of staff development.

MainFrame systems generally enhanced the delivery of YTS in Liverpool, partially through the opportunity to co-ordinate provision but also by confronting issues such as procedures for assessing and recording personal effectiveness in the workplace which had been addressed

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only in the vaguest terms. The module bank also provided an effective tool for developing and assessing integrated programmes.

Implementation has been co-ordinated through the YTS in Liverpool, partially through the opportunity to co-ordinate provision but also by confronting issues such as procedures for assessing and recording personal effectiveness in the workplace which had been addressed only in the vaguest terms. The module bank also provided an effective tool for developing and assessing integrated programmes.

Implementation has been co-ordinated through the YTS cross-sector group — established to inform WRNAFE planning of YTS across the city and consisting of representatives of the four colleges, the convener (later the MainFrame Development Officer), the careers service, the FE Adviser for Vocational Preparation and the Training Agency. In addition to its WRNAFE role, the group assumed a wider co-ordinating role of LEA YTS provision to:

- standardise administrative systems and procedures;
- monitor quality issues across programmes;
- monitor and maintain occupancy levels;
- plan staff development;
- plan and implement MainFrame;
- monitor, evaluate and moderate the use of MainFrame systems;
- establish a Trainee Information System across the LEA's YTS schemes.

Subsequently, a marketing sub-committee was formed to consider local labour market information, to develop a corporate approach to publicity and promotion, and to

evaluate outcomes. The role of the YTS cross-sector group was critical in planning and implementing MainFrame systems.

The introduction of MainFrame has generated only positive outcomes in terms of links between YTS and other agencies. It was recognised from the outset that while MainFrame would initially be introduced to YTS where programmes contained all the elements consistent with NVQs, would be extended into other WRNAFE programmes when operating effectively. This process has already begun in Liverpool in a number of vocational sectors. Also, compatible systems are being devised for TVEI and Compact. In this way, MainFrame will provide a modular credit transfer system which is coherent across the vocational education/training system in Liverpool.

Liverpool's experience suggests that MainFrame systems are transferable. The new module format is liked by college tutors, trainees and workplace supervisors, particularly where it is consistent with current NVQs. It has, of course, been necessary to learn from the experience of other partners and adapt the MainFrame system into the Liverpool context while maintaining a consistent format using the modules.

The quality of YTS programmes has subsequently improved and this is partly reflected in consistently higher occupancy levels than previously achieved. This however, has been due, in part, to the structural changes implemented as part of the process of introducing MainFrame. It is hoped that liaison officers will be appointed in the near future and Liverpool will be seeking to ensure that this does not dilute the level of integration and coherence currently evident. If liaison officers are introduced, their induction and staff development is the next major task to be undertaken.

## Box 2

### WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

Wirral Metropolitan College has been involved in training programmes ever since the earliest MSC initiatives such as short training courses, occupational selection courses, Work Experience on Employers' Premises (WEEP) and the Youth Opportunity Programme (YOP) before undertaking YTS. The present YTS provision developed naturally as a result of the college's commitment to vocational education and training. These original programmes were organised within the Vocational Preparation Department of the college, but organised under a separate unit called Project Wirral. This was set up as a 'quasi autonomous body' in a secondary school on the Wirral designed to cater for the needs of 16-year-old school leavers, using MSC Training Agency funding. Staff were seconded from the Vocational Preparation Department in a variety of vocational areas to meet the needs of the programmes, such as occupational selection. The unit also embraced a training workshop and a project scheme staffed by instructors recruited under contracts associated to MSC Training Agency funding.

The scheme achieved ATO status in June 1986, the Wirral Metropolitan College being one of the first colleges in the north-west to achieve it (without being referred to a second review of training arrangements). Although this makes it sound as if the college had no problems in ROTA, it was the way the scheme was monitored which enabled the college to

respond quickly to any emergent difficulties as the review progressed. The major area of the review that had to be handled most carefully was that of staff appraisal. All other aspects of the scheme, such as integration, passed inspection without any problems.

Prior to the arrival of a new principal, YTS within the college as an agency was seen as a provider of low-level training and never really seemed to fit into the rest of the college's operations. Links with CPVE were never explored (even as an alternative route). However, within the NAFE development plans this year, the scheme is seen as a full-time vocational element and trainees are classed as full-time students. CPVE is now being developed for the first time as an initiative, and will be linked to YTS as natural progression.

Staff development has always been linked to accredited centre courses. The college acted then, and now, as a sub-contractor for the ATC for the Merseyside outer area. Staff within the scheme have completed short courses, and the manager, assistant manager and motor vehicle co-ordinator teach within the ATC, which gives the courses an element of credibility. The college GRIST budget enables scheme staff to attend staff training courses within the college. A general advantage of the scheme is that it forms part of the staff

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development section of the college and allows staff development officers and scheme staff to work together. The recently approved NVQs have been a priority within the scheme, and co-ordinators and staff from associated departments have worked together to structure a coherent, assessable programme for the trainees. Two staff in the scheme have recently secured the Workplace Trainers Award which will enable them to structure work placement and provide training.

The college made the approach to join the MainFrame project as a result of:

- Wirral having close links with Liverpool LEA and its colleges, and to enable a structured and coherent approach for people in the Merseyside area. Wirral needed to respond to MainFrame as a result of Liverpool's involvement. This means that trainees and employers using MainFrame modular programmes in the Liverpool and Wirral colleges can effectively transfer from one programme to another.
- The new principal of Wirral Metropolitan College who came from Bedfordshire LEA, being instrumental in establishing MainFrame as a local collaborative project. The influence of the new principal stimulated the staff within YTS and the college. The MainFrame system has been the natural development of her experiences within YTS and the college. It was the principal who arranged with the MainFrame partners to extend an invitation to the scheme manager to join in the project, and Wirral responded with a positive commitment.

In the context of the college as a whole, certain pre-conditions had to be present to meet the requirements specified by the MainFrame Management Committee:

- YTS was acceptable in the content of the whole MainFrame provision.
- College mainstream departments were acceptable, but only in the context of full-time courses, i.e. college full-time students.

Now the YTS scheme has completely changed over to the MainFrame sector group meetings, and so on. The college's mainstream departments are gradually becoming conversant with MainFrame, but difficulties still exist in the staff development area. Mainstream departments have difficulty in coming to terms with MainFrame as a system of credit accumulation as they are already using NVQ and examination board systems, especially with respect to:

- RSA — record books;
- C&G — systems.

Generally, the delivery of YTS and the meeting of the four outcomes has not been a problem, as the system used by the scheme was already similar to that of MainFrame. The major area of re-organisation has been on a resource basis. The following cost implications had to be met:

- cost of financial contribution as a partner to MainFrame;
- staff replacement;

- travel and accommodation for staff attending meetings;
- photocopying MainFrame modules;
- staff development;
- MainFrame co-ordinator.

Besides staff resources, extra equipment has had to be purchased to meet the demands of implementing the MainFrame modular system. The following items were purchased to ensure the Wirral was able to participate equally with other partners:

- photocopier with a collating system;
- facsimile machine;
- racking system for MainFrame modules;
- additional filing cabinets.

The consequence of being a partner, relating to the outcomes and the curriculum of YTS, have been significant. The MainFrame approach enables records to be kept accurately within the training inventory. The curriculum has broadened within Wirral's scheme, and allows selected modules to be negotiated with trainees to meet their needs. Staff have, as a result, broadened their horizons.

Although MainFrame is still in its infancy in the Wirral Metropolitan College within YTS, it has already been totally embedded. Generally, there have been very few problems in linking MainFrame to outside YTS agencies, as most follow NVQs. MainFrame modules being, on the whole, based on industry-lead competences has made the situation easier. The Hairdressing vocational area has worked particularly well; a consortium of YTS hairdressing agencies worked with the Hairdressing Department to set up a working salon to enable competences to be assessed.

Although each agency uses different systems, the outcomes are the same. Scheme staff are already linked into sector groups and meet regularly with other partners. Separate staff development courses have been set up to familiarise departmental staff with the MainFrame philosophy.

As a new partner to MainFrame, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- The system is working well in the context of YTS but, generally, mainstream college staff do not see why it should be used in college departments when other systems accepted by examination boards and NVQs already exist.
- The system relies on the goodwill of staff, that is, attending meetings and so on. It needs to be embedded into the LEA to enable positive commitment to take place across all provisions.
- The potential of MainFrame needs to be explored quickly to enable it to be recognised nationally before other systems appear.
- As a vehicle for credit accumulation within YTS, CPVE, and for monitoring progress, the system is working well.

#### OBJECTIVES OF COLLABORATION

The objectives of the collaborative development programme were that, by 1989, the three LEA managing agents would have been successful in becoming ATOs, and would be working with each other and other agencies and bodies, such as the Training Agency and NCVQ, to manage a delivery system which should:

- cover the full range of needs and interest;
- incorporate units of credit within a credit transfer system;
- incorporate specified national standards;
- offer credible certification;
- integrate fully with non-YTS vocational education and training;
- develop procedures for reviewing and updating programmes;
- offer rigorous control of quality;
- facilitate delivery by a range of providers;
- be efficient in their operation;
- ensure equal opportunities for all.

Thus, the MainFrame project has been building on work initially undertaken in Bedfordshire, an authority noted for its innovative work in work-based learning. Its Foundation Year Scheme, as evaluated through FEU<sup>2</sup>, was the forerunner of the authority's YTS programme. From this innovative work, Bedfordshire LEA has been able to develop a programme of work-based learning within a framework acceptable to workplace supervisors and off-the-job tutors. An assessment and record system was developed for attainments in the core skills and personal effectiveness, and a competence-based approach to module construction has been adopted, with the development of particular techniques for deriving and moderating workplace standards.

#### THE ADVANTAGES OF COLLABORATION

The initially perceived advantages of the collaboration were seen as:

- the opportunity for LEAs to engage in an operationally united programme, allowing individualised programmes which built upon work in Bedfordshire, in CPVE and BTEC;
- immediate access to modules covering a full range of vocational sectors;
- the opportunity to contribute to the modular scheme;
- the adaptation of systems and structures working effectively elsewhere to own context, benefiting from the experience of the original collaborating authorities;
- partners being able to pool resources when responding to developments in YTS vocational education and training.

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As published in *Converting Working into Learning*, Longman for FEU, November 1985

Subsequently and retrospectively, the collaborating authorities were able to identify a large number of emergent benefits from the collaboration, such as:

- access to modules which enabled credit to be given for learning at work within a consistent format also covering learning off-the-job;
- the introduction of a system which allowed emphasis on the formative assessment of competence gained at work;
- access to a system which anticipated and conformed to requirements emanating from NCVQ;
- a coherent, structured approach to assessment and accreditation;
- cross-fertilisation of ideas amongst partners;
- availability of staff development — collaboration gives access to better and more up-to-date information about developments in YTS, NCVQ, and so on;
- staff being better prepared to take on the challenges provided by developments in vocational education and training;
- up-to-date information on new initiatives;
- exchange of information;
- meeting colleagues from different LEAs and colleges;
- facilitating the re-assessment and re-organisation of YTS in the LEA;
- the unification of YTS in colleges and schemes;
- the establishment of a much more powerful pressure group by the linking of a number of authorities which can influence developments in YTS;
- the strength to be derived from the collaborative project furthering other consultations and negotiations with various national bodies, particularly relating to credit transfer;
- the additional benefits of collaboration in terms of involvement in wider curriculum and administrative developments, and the inherent awareness-raising and staff-development issues which come from sharing ideas and experiences between LEAs;
- the potential to extend Mainframe systems into 'mainstream' provision.

#### DISADVANTAGES OF COLLABORATION

Retrospectively, the main disadvantages of joining the collaborative project were seen as:

- giving up valuable time to attend sector group meeting;
- the need to adopt a rigid assessment structure;
- the failure to be able to respond immediately to local issues;
- the time factor in developing new programmes;



- college tutors felt that the introduction of the liaison officer role would dislocate them from contact with employers, which would militate against integration, reduce the quality of off-the-job training, and diminish the personal guidance role played by the course tutor;
- the costs of establishing and staffing a central unit;
- high emotional costs due to the necessary changes in organisational structure;
- to some extent staff training, although a fair amount of these costs have been met by the local accredited training centre.

On this latter point, it is worth noting that with the trend in MainFrame towards regionalism, this may be less of a problem in future as local partners can work closely together providing a tighter structure for staff development.

#### FUTURE NEEDS

MainFrame will need to develop strategies and structures to take into account four key factors which will dominate vocational education and training over the next three years.

#### *Employment for the 1990s*

This statement of government policy on vocational education and training marks an important watershed in the shifting balance of control over from the FE service to employers, predominantly those in the private sector. The proposals contained in the paper are set against a labour market characterised by markedly different demographic trends, increased global competition and new employment patterns, out of which is proposed a New Training Framework. Six reforms are proposed to meet these changing conditions in the 1990s:

- Training and vocational education need to be linked more closely to business and economic success.
- Employers and individuals should accept a greater share of responsibility for training within a government-devised framework.
- Recognised standards of competence relevant to employment should be drawn up by industry-led organisations and validated nationally.
- Training must provide access to qualifications based on these standards.
- Responsibility for training should be devolved to a local level, bringing together private and public investment.
- Enterprises, individuals and local communities must be able to shape arrangements, programmes and opportunities to changing needs and circumstances.

In meeting these objectives nationally, the government has set up a National Training Task Force with the principal function of establishing local Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). The government will encourage the creation of a network of about 80 TECs with the remit to contract with central government to plan and deliver training and promote and support the development of



small businesses and self-employment in their area. The intention is that at least two-thirds of the TECs will comprise employers at top management level from the private sector, with the remainder drawn from education, voluntary bodies and trade unions which support the TECs. Their specific brief will be to provide local labour market intelligence, draw up plans for securing quality training to meet local needs, and sub-contract YTS, ET and adult retraining initiatives.

In relation to these developments, the White Paper highlights the increased need for a better educated and trained workforce more adaptable and responsive to new conditions.

### **The New Training Initiative**

Most of the government's initiatives since 1981 have been within the framework of NTI which contained two important strands: one has been the development of programmes, the most significant of which have been YTS, TVEI and ET; the second and more recent have been the developments linked to the Training Agency's Standards Development programme and NCVQ. The long-term future of YTS seems uncertain; demographic trends indicate fewer in the 16-19 age group and YTS has to adapt to changing market conditions. The combined effect of economic upturn and falling numbers of young people will result in more competition for YTS. In this situation it is crucial that training is tailored to the needs of business. The government has recently announced a relaxation of the requirements for YTS. This will be achieved through changing to a more market-led rather than product-led approach, which emphasises 'outcomes' of training qualifications rather than processes.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, with all LEAs now involved in TVEI and many in TVEI extensions, and ET certain to be a major training initiative which will be strengthened and refined over the next decade, the overall future and importance of post-16 education and training seems assured.

The Standards Development Programme is now well entrenched, with a number of Industry Lead Bodies in place and beginning the process of identifying national standards of competence in their own vocational areas. As the standards emerge, they are being led into NCVQ so that qualifications can be measured against these. NCVQ has, at the time of writing, given provisional accreditation to about 90 qualifications, and this process is likely to continue if not accelerate in the near future.

The Training Agency will develop NTI further by giving greater coherence to the system and added emphasis to the right and ability of individual learners to determine their own training needs and career development with the help of professional guidance and support. The key strategy is likely to be the *action plan* approach currently being developed and refined in ET, linking into the National Record of Vocational Achievement (NROVA) which is likely to be adopted from the age of 14 upwards, and form the basis of assessment for YTS. Action plans should seek to:

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of these changes is given by T. Goulbourn in 'Flexibility — What it Really Means', *Youth Training News*, No. 53, March 1989, p.3

- identify further relevant educational qualification targets;
- indicate further relevant vocational qualification targets;
- specify appropriate work experience/activity;
- develop personal effectiveness.

The Training Agency's own action plan for NTI includes:

- fostering a climate of acceptance for the general strategy;
- ensuring broad-based competences for all young people;
- providing progression to higher level skills and qualifications;
- bringing about a more responsive, coherent and cost-effective vocational education and training system.

### **The Education Reform Act**

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) requires LEAs to make a written policy statement, specifically for FE, which should describe the policies and procedures they intend to adopt. FE officers are thus currently engaged in the strategic planning of provision which includes WRFE and TVEI extension, and attempts to integrate the requirements of the National Curriculum and NCVQ. All these requirements are prompting a substantial review of post-16 provision and offer the opportunity for LEAs and institutions to develop and consolidate, within a coherent context, new approaches to the changing national context.

Within this process of curriculum change, many LEAs are concerned not to lose sight of the primacy of the learner. This consideration is leading them towards a commitment to curriculum entitlement and a process of learner- or client-led institutional change<sup>4</sup>.

Delegation of financial control from LEA to colleges will provide greater freedom for institutions, but commensurate dangers for those unwilling or unable to respond to the harsher realities of the emerging scene in the next decade. In particular, colleges will need to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of the local employment market and able to establish effective partnerships with TECs and other employers.

### **The Single European Market**

1992 will have a considerable impact on the qualification system in the UK and, by implication, on training and assessment arrangements. The creation of the single market will greatly enhance the mobility of labour within the European Community and thereby increase pressure to standardise qualifications or at least establish a clear system of equivalences. There is already a strong feeling that the British workforce is underqualified and that British qualifications fall below requirements for occupational competence in other countries. The impetus towards greater European coherence will certainly provide the

<sup>4</sup> *Towards a Framework for Curriculum Entitlement*, FEU, 1989, and Bob Kedney and David Parkes (Eds), *Planning the FE Curriculum: Implications of the 1988 Education Reform Act: Perspectives from Administrators and Managers*, FEU, 1988

opportunity to share training strategies and experiences across member nations.

From the perspective of MainFrame, a number of inferences may be drawn from an analysis of these four key factors:

- There will be skills shortages in a number of key areas over the next three years, especially in business and finance, hospitality services, and IT.
- High quality training and education programmes for those in the 16-19 age group will be at a premium.
- Emphasis on training and re-training will increase, particularly for adult workers — both unemployed and in work.
- The need for flexible training arrangements for the above, and special opportunities for women and ethnic minorities will be greater.
- Closer partnerships will be required between education and employment, especially at regional and local level.
- There will be greater urgency for the accreditation of achievement in the form of competence-based qualifications (wherever possible to national employment-led standards) which may include assessment on demand and the accreditation of prior learning.
- Employers and individual learners will be expected to have greater control over the form and content of training and providers will need to be ready to anticipate and respond.
- Providers ought to provide frameworks for the rounded development of the individual and the opportunity to progress.
- The run-up to 1992 will provide a Europe-wide context for these developments.
- In novel and sometimes difficult circumstances there will be tangible benefits in the widespread collaboration of providers to share experiences and influence the shape of things to come.

In many ways, MainFrame's work, to date, has anticipated these future needs and prepared the ground for these developments; subsequent sections of this report will reveal the progress made towards these future needs. The MainFrame model has not yet been equally influential in all the partners. In Haringey, for example, this benefit from collaboration has been progressed through its Credit Accumulation Project (see Box 3) which is seeking to enable the authority to become more flexible and responsive to the needs of its users and potential users; and through its HELIX Project (see Box 4) which is blurring the divide between academic and vocational education and training programmes. On the other hand, the MainFrame model has not yet influenced the FE curriculum in Bedfordshire in the way originally aimed for. It is perhaps the price paid for pioneering approaches too far in advance on mainstream developments. The appearance of NVQs and associated assessment methods has provided the LEA with an opportunity to use MainFrame exemplars within its overall GRIST programme. The LEA policy

in Bedfordshire, post-ERA, will be to encourage modularisation. Much of its development fund will be directed towards changing structures and systems in FE institutions to accommodate associated change. In particular, the new curriculum will:

- heighten the need for industry/FE links;
- create an impetus for open learning resource centres to support delivery of curriculum;
- create a need for targeted staff development into the 1990s;
- accelerate a trend towards joint college/workplace delivery of vocational qualifications;
- demand a more student-centred approach to curriculum design and delivery.

Bedfordshire has developed a curriculum framework, designed to encompass all full-time provision 14-18, as part of their TVEI extension. The framework is closely wedded to the idea of a core and a curriculum entitlement. Because of the 'A' Level/GCSE vocational mix post-16, it is not surprising that the framework largely ignores the issue of NCVQ and modularisation with its assessment approaches. The LEA is using MainFrame experience to focus on the issue of industry-led approaches to the curriculum and applications for the TVEI framework. These issues concern primarily:

- records of achievement post-16;
- modular curriculum post-16;
- curriculum entitlement.

Further, Bedfordshire LEA was successful in tendering for the sole training agent for Bedfordshire and also contracts with the Training Agency as a Training Manager. Its successful bid was made possible because of its MainFrame experience; the development of ET will mirror and build upon the delivery systems developed through MainFrame and the central YTS agency. In particular, ET will enable the authority to pilot and test new approaches to:

- assessment of prior achievement;
- personal action plans;
- guidance and support;
- records of achievement;
- module writing.

It is worth noting, however, that Bedfordshire is the only one of the collaborating partners currently directly and actively involved in the provision of ET.

In broader terms, MainFrame collaborating authorities are taking account of European developments (see Box 5).

### Box 3 CREDIT ACCUMULATION PROJECT

One of the MainFrame partners — Haringey — has successfully bid for Mutual Development Fund (MDF) money to support a project on credit accumulation. Primarily, this project is about embedding the MainFrame model, beyond YTS, into eight vocational areas within WRFE in the borough:

|       |                                                               |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| TOC A | Office Skills<br>Business                                     |
| TOC B | Design<br>Hairdressing<br>Floristry                           |
| TOC C | Nursery Nursing<br>Personal, Community and<br>Social Services |
| TOC K | Carpentry                                                     |

A number of validating bodies have already been involved — C&G, London Chamber of Commerce, BTEC, Hairdressing Training Board, CCETSW, and the CITB. However, there has been some concern early on in the project that the reluctance of some validating bodies to take on the concept of delivery via single credits will hinder the project. Other problems have also been foreseen, such as registration and examination fees, especially for those on low income, which may make the modular schemes prohibitively expensive. Other bodies have also been built into the project. For example, FEU is currently undertaking an MDF project with the Hairdressing Training Board to

implement the nationally preferred scheme, which this project will be keeping in contact with. Other credit accumulation programmes in London are being consulted, and partners of MainFrame are being asked to participate in the project, where feasible. Indeed, the MainFrame management group expressed the view that this project is a most significant development in integrating the MainFrame approach into mainstream FE, with its emphasis on flexible delivery in terms of timetabling, resourcing, staffing, enrolment (entry and exit points), learning materials which support individual programmes and different teaching strategies. The project will be carefully monitored and, where possible, replicated in each of the partners.

Haringey has been able to second, full-time, a person to co-ordinate the project. The MDF project was launched with a residential course for sector leaders at which there was some concern over module writing and units of assessment. As a result, further meetings have been organised with sector teams and a range of validating bodies. Each sector group has been developing its own plans for credit accumulation, and showing variation in progress. A newsletter will be produced to disseminate the aims and progress of the project. A framework for monitoring and evaluating this project has been devised. This seeks to monitor and evaluate INSET events, progress against the action plans drawn up by each sector group, and information about students and their programmes, bearing in mind the needs of college information systems resulting from the LEA Schemes of Delegation, following the ERA.

### Box 4 THE HELIX PROJECT

Haringey made a successful bid to the Youth Development Project fund for a project entitled 'Integrating the Academic and Vocational Curriculum' with the following general aims:

- to design programmes which integrate academic and vocational elements into a coherent curriculum framework;
- to ensure that appropriate programmes of staff development are available for college tutors, workplace supervisors and higher education 'gatekeepers' and lecturers;
- to refine, in co-operation with partner employers and institutions of higher education, competencies and qualifications required to facilitate students' progression;
- to ensure that the processes and outcomes of each phase of the project are effectively disseminated to college tutors, training organisations' liaison officers, management, co-operating employers and their staff, the employer network and local higher education providers;
- to evaluate the development processes and resultant provision;
- to produce interim and final reports which provide an outline of the work done, give examples of good

practice and examine difficulties encountered;

- to examine the difficulties inherent in providing integrated courses.

The project initially focused on three qualification routes shown by pilot research to provide the basis for a coherent structure:

- 'A' Level Communication
- C&G 779 (Print Journalism)
- GCSE Media Studies

The aim is to pilot units of learning which deliver media-related competencies, via assignments which integrate on- and off-the-job training and practical and academic skills, as well as to develop and pilot a system of standardised assignment record sheets which can incorporate a range of objectives and assessment outcomes compatible with the requirements of 'A' Level, C&G and local accreditation systems. Employers had been sounded out and their support gained for the project, which facilitated the mapping of job opportunities in the media. Links with institutions of higher education had also been established to enhance progression. The project envisaged a two-tier approach to its extension — one into food technology and the other into business studies, both of which have a clear occupational focus and links with academic courses; there are already links with employers in these occupational sectors. This project has recently been approved.



## **Box 5**

### **THE PETRA PROJECT**

PETRA is one of several initiatives on vocational education and training sponsored by the European Commission. Currently, some 154 projects covering all European Community member states are registered under PETRA and are eligible for funding under two phases.

Phase A (covering the first year) funding provides for projects to explore and set up twinning arrangements between projects in different member states.

Phase B (covering two years) is intended to fund initiatives involving projects twinned through Phase A. These initiatives are intended to cover one or more of the following:

- exchanges of young people and staff;
- transfer of teaching materials, content and methods;
- adaptation of training structures, content and certification;
- joint planning and the use of training courses, materials and certification.

MainFrame is currently involved in Phase A and is exploring links with a number of projects in Holland, Belgium, France and Spain, the focus of which is the integration of workplace and college/school training.



### 3. PROGRAMME DESIGN

#### MODULAR PROGRAMME DESIGN

At the heart of the development of MainFrame has been the attempt to deliver YTS through a unit credit transfer system built around a modular framework intended to go beyond YTS and have currency in other areas of WRFE. This is in line with national trends. Modular courses first began to appear in English universities in the 1960s and spread into the polytechnics in the 1970s. By the 1980s, following large-scale modular developments in Scotland (with their 16+ action plan — SCOTVEC), the modular movement had extended into FE and was beginning to find its way into national business and technical qualifications such as BTEC. The movement was accelerated by curricular initiatives such as YTS, TVEI, CPVE and, more recently, GCSE.<sup>1</sup>

The impetus towards modularisation was boosted by the government's Review of Vocational Qualifications (RVQ), which spent a year in the mid-1980s looking at the present vocational qualification systems and recommended the establishment of NCVQ to rationalise current qualification routes and develop a firmly based vocational qualification system. This was formally set up by the government in October 1986.

Initially, RVQ kept an open mind about modularisation. At the point of its first report it was uncertain about committing itself to a modular framework:

... we have given a good deal of thought to modularisation and have seriously considered whether we should recommend the adoption, within the national framework, of some particular modular approach. But it is unlikely in our view that a single pattern of modular provision will satisfy all the requirements that have to be met within the national framework.<sup>2</sup>

Even now, NCVQ is keeping its options regarding modularisation open; it is primarily concerned with outcomes, not delivery. While envisaging an NVQ system built on competence-based assessment, it has said that these qualifications need not be accredited solely through a modular delivery system.

Two immediate issues needed addressing:

- the distinction between modules of accreditation and learning;
- whether modules should be defined in terms of competence<sup>3</sup>.

NCVQ delegated the task of analysing the issues associated with modularisation and its possible adoption for NVQs to FEU. Its analyses<sup>4</sup> were based on existing types of modular provision;

<sup>1</sup> M. Farley *et al.*, *Modularisation and the New Curricula*, Coombe Lodge Report, vol. 19, no. 4, 1986, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales: A Report by the Working Group*, HMSO, April 1986.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Modularisation and NVQ: A Study of the Issues Associated with the Adoption of Modularisation within NVQ*, FEU, January 1987.

their characteristics, definition and objectives; their scale of provision and use; their advantages and disadvantages. As well as providing a comprehensive review of existing modular systems — BTEC, C&G, CPVE, Engineering Industry Training Board, Hotel and Catering Training Board, Pitman Examinations Institute, RSA, Road Transport ITB and SCOTVEC — FEU identified the characteristics of different patterns of modular systems and pointed to the following issues related to modularisation:

- degree of prescription;
- programme philosophy;
- cumulative credit;
- credit transfer;
- assessment criteria;
- cost of assessment and accreditation;
- teaching/learning methods;
- outcomes of learning;
- administration and support.

Each of these will be examined in relation to the MainFrame modular system.

#### MAINFRAME MODULAR SYSTEM

The MainFrame modular programme is designed to meet the revised YTS framework outlined in Figure 2. It is also designed to accommodate existing qualification schemes and fulfil the criteria laid down for the revised national vocational qualification system. It is seeking to develop the following characteristics:

*Modules which:*

- are coherent groups of assessable outcomes;
- carry credit for YTS certification in their own right;
- articulate with other programmes and programme elements;
- have a simplicity and consistency of layout;
- are co-ordinated conceptually and administratively;
- span the range of vocational education and training needs;
- permit delivery by a range of methods.

*A delivery framework which incorporates and organises the modules with regard to:*

- induction and assessment;
- a foundation of education;
- the theory underlying occupation practice;
- role execution;
- skills development;
- integration of learning;
- transfer of learning;

*ensuring that there is:*

- guidance and support;
- assessment and review;
- preparation for access to opportunities after YTS (progression).

One of the tasks of MainFrame has been to develop a bank of modules for use by collaborating agencies, from which individual training programmes are built up. Typically, soon after joining

the scheme, trainees negotiate their training plans (originally, Training Plan A was the on-the-job training and Training Plan B was for off-the-job training, but this is now under review) with agency staff. They may examine model programmes or industry-preferred schemes to select relevant and appropriate modules from the module bank, copies of which will be handed over to the workplace supervisor and college tutors. At least six (and generally more) modules should be achieved in the workplace; each trainee may take as many as 40 modules over the two-year period, with an expected minimum of 10 per year.

Originally, each module had approximately 20 competence statements. Although these are designed primarily for assessment purposes, they indicate the elements a trainee requires along the route to full occupational competence and provide the bare bones of a training programme on to which other components can be hung. Each unit should be a self-standing area of competence, one which will be recognised and have value in employment and carry credit towards national qualifications. While each module has a notional time base of some 40 hours of training and related experience, it is expected that this time will vary because of individual trainees' previous experience, ability and opportunities in their work placements. In other words, it is intended that modules be seen as standards-based rather than time-based.

The modules were originally arranged in four levels:

- I Needs further experience to be competent.
- II Competent under close supervision.
- III Competent under general supervision.
- IV Competent unaided and able to assist others.

Attainment is assessed in every element of a young person's training, against specific competence statements contained in the modules. Progress through the programme may be related to appropriate vocational qualifications. Credit is given for competences gained and qualifications awarded. Each programme should include modules that fulfil each of the seven programme purposes outlined above, and this should ensure the use of modules which relate directly to the attainments in the core and IT, and personal effectiveness which are Training Agency requirements.

When the FEU evaluation began in January 1987, MainFrame had created a bank of some 500 modules. By the end of 1987 the bank had doubled in size; it currently has some 1200 modules. All these are carefully checked and catalogued using a simple classification system. Those of a process nature are suitable for use at two or more of the four levels outlined earlier, according to the criteria set for attainment.

Modules are divided into three types:

- *General modules*

These cover educational elements basic to the successful performance of a given work role or of value for trainees' progression to higher levels. They are typically concerned with communication, numeracy, sciences, IT, enterprise, and

personal and career development. In different proportions and at different levels, these modules are common to all vocational sectors.

- *Generic vocational modules*

These may relate to more than one vocational sector, though again in different proportions and at different levels. Examples of generic modules may be *Stock Control* or *Reception Duties*, which can be common across a of occupational sectors.

- *Specific vocational modules*

These are grouped according to the Training Agency's Training and Occupations Classification (TOC), with the use of TOC X to group together Electronic, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, and therefore relate mainly to a single occupational area. In many instances the modules will have relevance to sectors other than those they are listed against. Also, modules regarded as specifically vocational for one sector may be generic for another.

In order to indicate how modules should be used in training programmes, each has been assigned one or more programme purposes and levels. The current programme purposes are:

- *Induction and initial assessment*

These modules cover the corresponding YTS training processes and are typically (but not only) used at the beginning of a programme. They may be used in both on- and off-the-job training.

- *Foundation of education*

Modules with this purpose provide for basic educational competences and will typically cover areas such as communications or numeracy. Most of these will be general or generic vocational modules and used in off-the-job training.

- *Theory underlying practice*

These modules cover areas of theory which underpin competence in an occupation; an electrician, for example, is required to demonstrate an understanding of Ohm's Law or electrical induction. Generally, these will be used in off-the-job training.

- *Role execution*

These modules incorporate the tasks involved in actually doing the job, such as installing a ring main or supervising children's activities. Most role execution modules will be used in on-the-job training, but could also be used in simulated work experience in college or workshop situations.

- *Skills development*

Modules with this purpose are intended to develop a trainee's discrete skills in, for example, soldering, running cables, or typing.

- *Integration/transfer of learning*

Modules of these types contain elements of competence which

may be used in more than one occupational sector, such as tasks found in reception duties, stock control and so on. Typically these will be generic vocational modules which cut across several TOC areas.

Modules are recognised as being of one of four standards:

- 1 = Pre-vocational (allowing no exemptions at higher levels)
- 2 = Part craft (typically part one of C&G qualification)
- 3 = Full craft, part technician (typically part two of a C&G or part one of a technician award)
- 4 = Full technician (for example, the second year of a BTEC National Award)

#### MODULAR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The early modules were written by staff within the three authorities, working in small teams set up according to occupational sectors. Although not every occupational sector was covered, they corresponded with TOCs. In addition, the 200 modules produced as part of this initial development of what were largely general and generic vocational modules included the CPVE core modules.

Many of the modules in these areas were constructed by translating the syllabuses of existing vocational qualifications into modular terms and structure. Much of this work was done by college tutors. Until recently, there was very little guidance for writers of these modules, and standardisation had to be carried out as part of the validation process. There is now, however, a handbook on module design and writing which gives guidance on module size and on what each module should contain. Advice on coverage is that modules should reflect a competence 'big' enough to have value in employment but small enough to represent a manageable 'chunk' of learning. Each module should contain:

- a unique title which describes the competence;
- a general competence statement which summarises what trainees ought to be able to do on completion;
- a reference number;
- a level;
- programme purpose(s);
- its source;
- associated qualification routes;
- up to 25 learning outcomes expressed as competence statements.

One source of modules may be based on nationally preferred schemes. The Training Agency, after setting up two-year YTS, undertook to produce a range of illustrative material for particular occupational areas. These 'illustrative schemes' are intended to contain potential competence objectives. The sectors chosen are:

- process plant maintenance;
- construction;
- health and community care;
- distribution;

- hairdressing;
- clerical/secretarial;
- mechanical/engineering;
- agriculture/horticulture;
- leisure and recreation;
- clothing;
- hotel and catering;
- vehicle maintenance;
- information technology.

In some cases, where there is an industry-lead body such as the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), these have undertaken to produce 'industry preferred schemes'. In the case of CITB, 17 schemes had been put together, providing illustrative material relevant to the needs of young people who intend to follow a career in the building and specialist building sector. By June 1987, 56 illustrative schemes had been produced<sup>5</sup>.

In response to this, the MainFrame module bank had to be checked to ensure that the modules that exist in a particular occupational area more or less cover the illustrative scheme. This is important if the collaborative project's modular scheme is to fit with a national unit credit transfer system and national vocational qualifications. Where nationally preferred schemes exist, they are taken as a starting point and checked for breadth and balance of core, foundation of education and transfer, and to ensure they provide for processes such as induction, initial assessment and progression.

Throughout the project, attention has been paid to the development of work-based modules. The derivation, design and accreditation of work-based programmes has been a particular concern for MainFrame from its inception. From among several techniques available, the particular method being developed builds on the modified use of a curriculum-derivation technique imported from North America, called DACUM — Developing A Curriculum (see Box 6). DACUM was initiated in the mid-1970s in North America as part of a new approach to individual learning systems, to attempt to retrain for industry the long-term unemployed, seasonally unemployed, and those with learning difficulties. After a slow beginning, these have become widely used in Canada and, by 1980, a set of learning aids had been developed to support individual learning and was being introduced into the community college system. By 1981, no less than 40 skills profiles had been designed by teams of industry owners, managers, trainers and college tutors for the hospitality and tourism industries, as well as certain areas of the engineering and marine industries. The system now appears to be in wider use throughout the community and junior colleges there. In Britain, there has been some interest in the technique, especially in the FE sector. An earlier DACUM project, based at Burton-upon-Trent Technical College, was set up in March 1984 under the FEU PICKUP scheme to investigate its adaptation for learning and updating craft catering skills in the UK.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> A complete list provided in *Youth Training News*, no. 38, June 1987, pp. 32-33.

<sup>6</sup> G D Hermann and R J Keyon, *Competency-Based Vocational Education — A Case Study*, FEU, 1987.



## Box 6 DACUM AND DELPHI

From several techniques available, the particular methods being developed for the objective of a work-based curriculum centres around the modified use of DACUM (Developing A Curriculum). DACUM was initiated in the mid-1970s in North America as part of a new approach in individual learning systems, to attempt to retrain for industry the long-term and seasonally unemployed and those with learning difficulties. After a slow beginning, the technique has become widely used in Canada. By 1980, a set of learning aids had been developed to support the individual learning system, and it was being introduced into the community college system. In Britain, there has been some interest in the technique, especially in the FE sector. An earlier FEU project, based at Burton-upon-Trent Technical College, was set up in March 1984 under the PICKUP scheme to investigate its adaptation for learning and updating craft catering skills in the UK.

DACUM is based on the philosophy that:

- expert workers are better able to describe or define their occupation than anyone else;
- any job can be effectively and sufficiently described in terms of the tasks successful workers in that occupation perform;
- all tasks have direct implications for the knowledge and attitudes workers must have to perform them correctly.

In operational terms this means that:

- everyone participates equally;
- they share ideas freely and build on each others' ideas;
- participants are encouraged to provide constructive suggestions rather than negative criticisms;
- all contributions in the form of task statements are carefully considered;
- all task statements should begin with an action verb and reflect on observable performance ('can do' statements).

In practice, a DACUM session calls together a number of people who actually do a particular job (the 'role holder') and/or those who supervise that job, to identify the constituent tasks and duties related to that job. In small groups, the participants are encouraged, through brainstorming, to identify the specific tasks they perform in carrying out the role and their general areas of responsibility, or duties. Their contributions are written on cards in the form of competence statements relating to observable performance. Each task statement should:

- reflect a meaningful unit of work;
- contain an action verb;
- contain an object that receives the action;
- omit qualifiers such as 'effectively' and 'efficiently';
- be explicit and precise, and stand alone;
- avoid references to a specific employer, organisation, location or machine;
- avoid references to knowledge and attitudes required.

By displaying each of the task and duty statements identified, they may be reviewed and refined and then sequenced as far as possible in terms of importance, frequency and level of difficulty. A particular concern is to identify entry-level tasks that trainees should be able to do as the bare basics of the job. Again, this is done by the 'role holders' and/or supervisors, as experts. This should lead to a number of work-based task and duty statement which can

be translated very readily into competence statements and integrated into modules as part of the training programme.

Having derived a series of modules made up of a number of competence statements through DACUM, the next step is to test the curriculum. Each of the main duty areas and task statements need verifying. This has to be done by other 'role holders' and/or supervisors who, as experts, are asked to review and confirm or refute the importance of the task statements identified through the DACUM job analysis. The technique used for this verification process is Delphi, originally developed at the Rand Corporation in the United States during the 1950s as a tool for scientific and technological forecasting. As a method for obtaining group statements on factual matters for which precise information may not be available, or on values for which information is a matter of opinion, Delphi has since been widely used in American educational research and planning to investigate cost-effectiveness, goals and objectives and gain a convergence of opinions and rating scales, values and other evaluation elements. This method has a number of advantages:

- It can provide further evidence.
- It permits greater involvement.
- It enables the rating of task statements.
- It elicits more public support.
- It provides more public support.
- It provides more information for database decision making.
- It results in greater confidence about programme relevance.

The Delphi technique requires a sample of role holders to be identified and sent the modules generated through the DACUM session, together with a series of questions about:

- performance of the task;
- importance of the task in terms of the job;
- amount of time spent performing the task;
- necessity for successful entry into role.

This should facilitate decision making concerning training for the job for, given the scarce resources available for training, priority ought to be given to tasks that are considered the most:

- important;
- frequently performed;
- difficult to learn.

This verification technique feeds back evidence concerning the reliability of the DACUM statements and enables sensible training decisions to be made about the inclusion and sequencing of competence statements in modules.

Through staff training, communication and experience, there is now considerable expertise within the three LEAs in module construction and verification. The modules derived through DACUM reflect the diversity of the work roles undertaken by trainees. A significant number of trainees and supervisors have become proficient in drafting modules to meet the new workplace requirements. One outcome of the collaboration programme's development of DACUM and Delphi techniques should be the publication of a handbook for practitioners wishing to employ these techniques in designing and testing the curriculum in a range of training programmes, including YTS.

These techniques have been developed in a project in which MainFrame has been collaborating with C&G to produce work-based modules in six occupational areas, using staff seconded from the four authorities (see Box 7).

### **Box 7**

#### **THE C&G SIX-SECTOR PROJECT**

In order to assist in the national recognition of its modular development, MainFrame has been carrying out a joint project with C&G. This involved the setting up of six sector groups to develop work-based modules in the areas of:

- Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy (Haringey)
- Community and Health Care (Sheffield)
- Leisure and Recreation (Sheffield)
- Retailing and Distribution (Liverpool)
- Information Technology (Haringey)
- Electronics (Bedfordshire)

After an initial training day in January 1987 and a residential workshop the same month, more than 20 staff across the three LEAs developed awareness and competence in the administration of DACUM and Delphi techniques, and then proceeded to set up DACUM sessions in their geographical and occupational areas to derive competence-based modules based on what actually goes on in the workplace. With the co-operation of local employers and workplace supervisors, these were scheduled to be completed by November 1987, except in Liverpool which joined the project late and agreed to take on the retail and distribution development work. Although there was a general problem of getting sufficient Delphi responses, which was overcome by LEAs assisting each other, it was clear that the modules generated were of a generally satisfactory nature. For example, the modules derived using the Child Care Assistant role in Sheffield were cross-checked by C&G with their existing syllabi, and it was agreed that all the content was covered by the modules, together with existing modules that were used in the off-the-job training. The next step in the project is to move towards cross-matching knowledge and attitudes for the work-based modules and define performance criteria.

This project has had an important developmental effect on

the procedures used to derive modules, and the format and content of the modules themselves. The main difference in the six-sector modules, apart from no longer needing to be of a standard number of competence statements, is that they now contain an overall competence objective. On the backs of module sheets are listed performance criteria relevant for the achievement of the competence objective, relevant core skills, and the knowledge necessary to perform the task.

The parallel work of the Hairdressing Training Board meant that this occupational sector group was able to progress more quickly by linking with them. Consequently, it ceased to be a focus in the C&G project.

One concrete outcome, in terms of certification, from the C&G project was the possibility of awarding a certificate issued by the C&G Skills Testing Service to MainFrame trainees who successfully achieve the work-based modules in:

- Care Assistant Working with Mentally Ill Clients
- Care Assistant Working with Children
- Electronic Service Engineer
- Computer Operator
- Data Input Clerk
- Sports Centre Attendant
- Health Club Assistant
- Sales Assistant
- Warehouse Assistant

Further awards are expected for care assistants working with the elderly, playworkers, outdoor recreation assistants, freight forwarding clerks and pharmacy assistants.

This project has had important ramifications for the development of customised training, standards development for industry-lead bodies and staff development in participating institutions.

This project has had a number of outcomes, one of these being the production of a manual for the use of DACUM. This distinctive methodology has enabled staff from the collaborating authorities to extend MainFrame into other areas of WRFE, introduce the utility of the MainFrame scheme to local employers and other managing agencies, and organise their own staff-development programmes. At the same time, staff involved, especially liaison officers and some workplace supervisors, have become familiar and experienced with the processes and are sufficiently confident to produce work-based modules without necessarily going through the DACUM procedures; these have been tested and added to the module bank.

Moreover, DACUM techniques have been gradually refined through experience and have moved closer to the methods of deriving elements of competence developed by the Training Agency, known as *Analysis of Work Functions*<sup>1</sup>. This is a procedure for identifying and analysing occupational areas to develop competence-based, criterion-referenced standards credible to the occupation from which they are derived, being related to effective performance in work roles. It does not conflict with the MainFrame strategy. As the term suggests, it focuses on functions rather than jobs or the people doing those jobs, as in DACUM. In this sense, a function refers to a role expectation — things which need to be done, and the purpose or rationale for an occupation, job or task. The idea is to identify the functions that need to be performed if an organisation is to be effective and successful in meeting its objectives. The analysis is a process of defining this in greater detail so that competence standards can be defined for outcomes which contribute to some part of the pursuit of overall goals or objectives of the organisation. Thus, effectiveness in contributing to the pursuit of organisational objectives or aims, as required by the organisation, is seen as the ultimate measure of competence. The strategy for carrying out this analysis is to:

- decide on the key purpose of the occupational area;
- ask what needs to happen to do this;
- continue the process until the aggregation level is suitable for units and elements of competence.

This approach to the analysis of work functions, being 'top down', contrasts with DACUM. It complements rather than competes with DACUM's 'bottom-up' approach. Functional analysis is seen by MainFrame as a complementary way of producing a coherent and internally consistent structure carried out with those who have a wider view of organisations than the rather narrower perspective reflected through DACUM. Gradually, elements of the analysis of work functions are being built into MainFrame's curriculum derivation and verification procedures, but it could never fully replace the DACUM approach which has value beyond identifying national standards insofar as it is able to identify steps towards competence, and is therefore better able to inform the design of training programmes and not merely the broad units or elements of competence that are to be the desired outcomes.

#### INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

One of the Training Agency's concerns for enhanced flexibility is the provision of personal training programmes, which are to be prepared by managing agents in agreement with trainees. This will involve the development of individual action plans, constructed during the course of initial assessment or initial training, where appropriate. It is envisaged that this will be used in conjunction with NROVA as part of YTS, although individual action plans are being tested for use with all young people within a number of Youth Development Projects. The

<sup>1</sup> 'Development of Assessable Standards for National Certification', *Guidance Note 2: Deriving Elements of Competence — Functional Analysis*, Training Agency.

aim will be to cover all young people and include education as well as training after the age of 16.

This initiative has been anticipated by MainFrame. In theory, its modular credit accumulation scheme facilitates the accreditation of prior learning and, through initial assessment, individual training programmes may be designed. In this way, MainFrame has the facility to meet the needs of all young people, regardless of learning ability, physical disabilities, gender and ethnic background. MainFrame agencies, in having open access to YTS programmes, are able to take a wide variety of young people and attempt to negotiate with them a suitable training programme; in other words, to meet the whole range of needs.

Given this capacity for meeting individual needs, the MainFrame modular system and its associated methodology has the potential for use in designing training programmes for a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors. An example of its use for *customised training* is given in Box 8. This is an important emphasis in the project which will do much to establish its credibility beyond YTS.

#### **Box 8 BODDINGTONS BREWERY**

Liverpool LEA was approached, via contact with a lecturer at City College, by the Catering Training Manager at Boddingtons Brewery in Manchester. As a result of several meetings, the Training Manager formally wrote to the MainFrame management committee to request associate partnership in the project.

Boddingtons is the largest independent brewery in the North-West, with over 600 tied houses and 3,500 employees. Based in Manchester, the company also owns Higsons Brewery on Merseyside. Over the past two years, Boddingtons has sought to broaden its activities by introducing quality restaurant service into some of its outlets. There are now 15 of these (known as Henry's Table) and the intention of having 50 in five years' time.

YTS plays only a small part in the company's activities; it supplies work-experience places to a range of managing agencies, but was refused an application to become an ATO in its own right because of an over-allocation of catering places in the Manchester area. Some staff receive training under various C&G awards in Catering and Bar Service. Serious consideration has been given to providing training through Caterbase (the company's chairman is a member of the Hotel and Catering Training Board and there are a number of staff qualified to deliver Caterbase in the workplace), but the trainers expressed dislike for the

inflexibility of Caterbase, its inability to tailor programmes to their requirements, the difficulty of operation and, last but not least, the cost of running it.

From discussions with Boddingtons staff, it emerged that the company places a high premium on training to keep up with, if not ahead of, its competitors. It is interested in developing training programmes for all levels of workers, with built-in routes of progression. In large, this is a response to the significant turnover of staff that the company has, particularly in the unskilled area. It is felt that a firm programme of training with definite ideas on career progression would encourage more people to stay with the company in an occupational area where there is no longer a shortage of labour. The company is intending to use DACUM procedures to design and tailor schemes, particularly where no current modules or accreditation routes exist. They will buy into MainFrame, as an associate partner, access to the relevant modules, including more general ones, the delivery system, and the expertise of the MainFrame partners in undertaking DACUM job analysis.

The advantages to MainFrame in bringing in an industrial partner may be significant in terms of strengthening their national profile and deepening their expertise of industrial consultancy and training.

#### **ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION**

From the Training Agency's perspective, minimum criteria had been laid down with respect to assessment and certification that managing agents had to meet if they were to be awarded ATO status. They require the achievement of competences within occupational and core skills together with the development of ability to transfer skills and personal effectiveness to be recorded

in a form of certification and, where appropriate, vocational qualifications, or credit towards these, together with a record of achievement. This will now link into the NCVQ's NROVA. Until that decision had been made, the development of a modular structure and more flexible approaches to accreditation, as in MainFrame, was seen as positive progress towards meeting its aim that 'all trainees should seek to acquire a vocational qualification or credit towards such a qualification'.

The Training Agency is keen that all trainees on YTS be offered access to vocational qualifications or credit towards one. In approving qualifications, the criteria that the YTS Certification Board have applied are<sup>6</sup>:

- coverage of the four outcomes;
- accreditation of achievement;
- emphasis on work-based assessment;
- cost effectiveness;
- facilitation of progression;
- relevance of methods of assessment;
- flexibility of provision;
- credibility of qualification;
- compatibility with NVQs.

#### FOUR YTS OUTCOMES

An approved qualification and its separately accredited component modules will need to be based upon agreed standards which are not narrowly based on skills and knowledge alone but address all four outcomes of two-year YTS. In most instances, suggests the Training Agency, it is unlikely that the qualification itself will separately record achievement in each outcome, but it is important that it should capture the richness of achievement in on- and off-the-job training by entailing the demonstration of competence over a period of time, in familiar and new conditions, and the personal effectiveness to cope with the problems and variations involved in real-life situations. As outlined in Figure 3, MainFrame programme design incorporates the measurement of core skills and personal effectiveness, through modules and a specially designed checklist and inventory.

In MainFrame, a variation of the core skills checklist has been developed. The one in use during the evaluation period was very close to that used in CPVE as a bank of core competence statements covering 10 core areas, and as such would be approved by FEU.<sup>7</sup> This checklist was introduced following agreement that it:

- corresponds closely to the YTS core;
- meets young peoples' learning entitlements in a broader sense than YTS requires;
- exists in a form close to the requirements of YTS certification;

<sup>6</sup> *Qualifications in YTS: Guidance for Developing Qualifications in YTS*, MSC, September 1986

<sup>7</sup> See *Supporting Quality in YTS*, FEU, 1989



- enables MainFrame to articulate with the CPVE core attainments of young people, either prior to or during their YTS programme.

**FIGURE 3: MAINFRAME AND THE FOUR YTS OUTCOMES**

| <b>Outcomes</b>                                               | <b>Measured by</b>                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Competence in a range of occupational skills               | Modules                                   |
| 2. Competence in a range of transferable core skills          | Core checklist and modules                |
| 3. Ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations | Core checklist and modules                |
| 4. Personal effectiveness                                     | Personal effectiveness record and modules |

The checklist should normally be used at the beginning of the trainee's programme, to check the starting point in terms of attainment and identify learning needs, and then at each review to monitor progress. When the training plans are assembled, the training plan summaries can be checked against the core checklist for coverage and any obvious omissions dealt with. Following each individual (major) review, the core checklist should be used to give a picture of the trainee's progress. This information is now included on the training inventory and, since the C&G project, is being included on the back of each module sheet. This should highlight core areas not covered or where attainment could be higher; the training plan can be adjusted accordingly. At the final review and certification stage, the core checklist should be completed on the basis of the trainee's self-assessment, all providers' assessments, and the evidence available to back these up. The statements may then be transferred to the trainee's certificate.

In order to establish a basis for the measurement of personal effectiveness, MainFrame has developed two main strategies:

- the inclusion of personal effectiveness competence statements within modules;
- the personal effectiveness inventory.

The statements which assess personal effectiveness in modules are not always easily identifiable nor deliberately included in and across all modules. The advantage of approaching personal effectiveness in this way, however, would be to integrate the assessment of personal effectiveness, like that of core skills, into the modular structure. Secondly, it would recognise the possibility and need to assess personal effectiveness outside the world of work. As it is, there is a tendency to restrict interest in personal effectiveness to that in the workplace, even though off-the-job training has customarily provided the setting and staff for enhancing personal effectiveness and development of individuals. As FEU recognises, 'life is greater than work and while, for many young people, the new world of work may be their pre-



occupation, it is the responsibility of education to help prepare them for roles additional to this<sup>10</sup>. Opportunities, therefore, have to be made for trainees to develop personal effectiveness in a way that enables them to be involved in its practice and assessment in a participative way.

Within MainFrame, the main mechanism for assessing and recording work-related personal effectiveness has been the Personal Effectiveness Inventory (PEI). Its format and contents were originally derived from research work carried out in North America and subsequent refinements from a pilot study by Bedfordshire LEA. It has to be stressed that the PEI is intended for use only in employer-based or simulated work experience.

The PEI had three functions:

- It aims to identify a trainee's personal characteristics as they relate to a work role.
- It attempts to construct a profile of personal characteristics appropriate to a given work role.
- It allows for comparison of the personal and occupational profile and as such can be an instrument for self-evaluation and reflection.

Trainees were supposed to be introduced to the PEI at the first group review in which they can be given the opportunity to assess their own role-related personal qualities. The workplace supervisor (who should have received training in the use of PEI) should assess the essential personal characteristics of a given role in that organisation, and this occupational profile is then checked against a wider sample to ensure authenticity. The supervisor then assesses the trainee against the agreed profile immediately prior to an individual or major review, and compares the result with the trainee's self-assessment. Areas of common satisfaction or concern, or differences in assessment, can then be discussed at the individual review and, if necessary, an action plan agreed.

The assessment procedures being developed by MainFrame certainly fulfil the requirements of Training Agency assessment and certification, but the complexity of the system creates a good deal of paperwork, involving some duplication which off-the-job tutors, in particular, feel ought to be streamlined.

#### ACCREDITATION OF ACHIEVEMENT

The Training Agency suggests that qualifications in YTS should allow accreditation of achievement. Indeed, a particular strength of MainFrame is that its modular system, based on competence statements, permits the recognition and separate accreditation of useful achievement and experience. This enables trainees to acquire either a full vocational qualification or credits towards this. However, until NVQs are settled (see below), such accreditation has to link with existing vocational qualifications. It can be shown that MainFrame modules are being successfully used in the teaching of a range of vocational courses, including those of RSA, C&G and BTEC, which take into account continuous assessment of competence-based skills and knowledge

<sup>10</sup> *Supporting Quality in YTS*, FEU, 1989.

and credit prior learning. However, it has been noted that there is a tendency for teaching and training to be led by the curricular demands of such vocational qualifications, with the modules selected for the closeness of their fit with these qualifications.

#### WORK-BASED ASSESSMENT

The Training Agency also places emphasis on accrediting performance in the workplace. Work-based assessment is seen as a relatively new aspect of certification and arrangements need to ensure that the standards and achievements recorded will have credibility and be capable of national recognition. To this end, the Training Agency has been supporting the work of industry-lead bodies to establish national occupational standards as the criteria upon which to make work-based assessments. In addition, the Training Agency has supported work-based assessment in a number of projects.

Building on the assumption that there was currently little integration between on- and off-the-job training assessment, Jean Woodhall<sup>11</sup> undertook to develop some new assessment instruments based on record of achievements and a personal effectiveness monthly checklist. The 'progress pack' aimed to record progress and achievement in:

- *Occupational competence*

Using trainee self-assessment with supervisor moderation according to a four-point scale.

- *Core skill competence*

Managing agent/supervisor/trainee to agree and record progress in core skill awareness, for use in review sessions.

- *Ability to transfer*

Supervisor/trainee identification of opportunities to transfer skills taken advantage of by trainee.

- *Personal effectiveness*

Open format, trainee-led summary completed monthly to record achievements and feelings, with optional supervisor moderation.

Thus the Training Agency supported the development of work-based assessment that was:

- trainee-centred;
- trainee-led;
- continuous;
- formative;
- efficient.

Another study<sup>12</sup> focused on the reliability of the assessments made of trainees by workplace supervisors, for the accreditation of relevant skills. The research found that none of the supervisors found the concept or process of assessment difficult to grasp.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Woodhall, *The Marlborough Project — Work-Based Assessment in YTS*, MSC LQ1 A410, 1987

<sup>12</sup> A Wolf and R Silver, *Work-Based Learning: Trainee Assessment by Supervisors*, MSC, Research and Development Series no. 33, May 1986

They treated each assessment occasion separately and judged performance at that time. There was resistance to using the simple 'can/cannot' dichotomy in assessing performance, some intermediary category(ies) being preferred. On the whole, there was internal consistency in supervisors' assessments, but limited reference to national or common standards; thus, there was limited external consistency of judgements. This has implications for both workplace supervisor training in assessment procedures and/or alternative means of carrying out work-based assessment. The research did clarify the role that workplace supervisors can play in assessment of vocational competence:

Assessment exercises that are closely linked to workplace demands and that are administered by workplace supervisors have three important advantages. They are inherently flexible and would respond to constantly changing industrial and commercial practice. The workplace provides opportunities for demonstrating applied skills. It is also relatively easy to provide for repeated demonstrations of a skill.<sup>13</sup>

The research also demonstrated the weak relationship between trainees' performances on different occasions and underlines the dangers of relying solely on one-off assessment procedures.

The MainFrame project has done much development work in this area to ensure that trainees' work-based achievements are properly assessed and that this assessment is integrated into the overall YTS assessment system which is accredited and contributes to certification. Perhaps the highest quality work has been carried out within the C&G project (see Box 7). Not only have the competence statements and performance criteria been derived from the work placements, but the form and procedures for assessment are designed to ensure that the trainee's competence is developed and assessed over a period of time and not subject to once-and-for-all testing. This may be one possible strategy for reducing the degree of subjectivity in the assessment of performance.

#### COST EFFECTIVENESS

The Training Agency suggests that certification and assessment arrangements will need to recognise the funding regimes available to YTS and take account of changes that are due in April 1989. They should offer a system of certification which is realistically costed within those constraints. The FEU evaluation was not primarily concerned with issues of finance or economy. However, insofar as the cost of assessment and certification does prove to be a constraint that limits the potential of the MainFrame model, this requires discussion. Any complex modular system with a sophisticated assessment, accreditation and certification procedure will have resource implications.

#### PROGRESSION

Qualifications approved for YTS should facilitate entry into and progression in employment, further education and/or training; recorded achievement should allow for access and recognition towards other qualifications.

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2

#### RELEVANCE

According to the Training Agency, methods of assessment should be relevant to the nature of the skills being assessed and capable of recording all recognisable achievements of specified standards. MainFrame has addressed the issue of relevance; those involved in the administration of assessment procedures have expressed opinions to suggest that, on the whole, it is meeting this criterion of relevance. Its provision is suitable for trainees of all abilities, though it has been suggested that the use of modules at a basic level and with special needs trainees may require further developmental work.

#### FLEXIBILITY

According to the Training Agency, the attainment of vocational qualifications in YTS should rely more on the achievement of standards than on time-serving. Although MainFrame has placed a notional time on the duration of modules, this is for guidance of tutors and trainers only. In practice, there are no specified time limits on how long the achievement of a module should take. Although some guidance on minimum and maximum limits are placed on the number of modules that should be taken in each year of the two years of YTS, individual programmes are designed to reflect the needs of the trainee and paced at the appropriate speed. In this way, MainFrame meets the demand for flexibility to enable trainees to achieve what they are capable of within YTS entitlement without being constrained by method or place.

The Training Agency has specified that schemes should also be flexible in meeting the needs of particular disadvantaged groups. MainFrame managing agents have made much progress on this, to the point where, in their areas, they become the natural choice of the careers service for placing trainees with special needs. In the case of trainees with special learning needs, the modules have a greater significance, particularly if the trainees are not entered for national qualifications. The YTS Certificate or record of credit accumulation (the *Training Inventory* — see Appendix 2) is likely to be the only form of credit they take away from the scheme. In some of these cases, off-the-job sites also provide work-experience training; alternatively, the workshop, projects or schemes which provide work-experience are also the site for off-the-job training. In these cases, the modules are used more regularly and centrally as the focus of a trainee's programme, including assessment.

Throughout the FEU evaluation, comments have been fed back about the lack or inappropriateness of Access modules. The careers service in each of the LEAs has recognised these shortcomings, but still believe that these agencies are the best place to develop and support this work. However, in one of the newer partners — Liverpool — it was recently reported that the use of modules for special needs trainees was temporarily suspended, awaiting the results of a research project examining the potential of MainFrame modules for this group. The other partners will hope to learn from that research too. There is always the danger that the MainFrame modular system will serve the interests of the most able trainees, while a separate system is

developed for the less able. In accordance with their overarching aims and objectives, it must be assumed that MainFrame will seek to avoid this, especially as the ability to cater for special needs is one of the strengths of the collaborative project.

#### CREDIBILITY

In order to be credible, qualifications should be based on methods of assessment which are valid, reliable and effective. MainFrame has carried out much staff training to ensure that those involved in new forms of assessment understand the new procedures and are motivated and competent at completing the necessary assessment sheets although, as indicated above, the FEU evaluation found much variation in practice — a finding that has led to MainFrame taking action to enhance standardisation and motivation, through staff development activities.

The Training Agency has also stated that, if they are to be credible, qualifications should be issued by a recognised certifying body as providing evidence to employers and industry of competence to an agreed standard, and that this qualification should be supported by a lead industry body. In order to achieve the aim of offering 'credible certification' through their unit credit transfer system, the MainFrame partners have had to ensure that the modules articulate with existing national qualifications. This has been by modularising a wide range of vocational courses, encompassing BTEC, C&G and RSA.

MainFrame modules are examined by the relevant sector group each time a nationally preferred scheme is published, to ensure comprehensive coverage. If this is done and new modules are created where necessary, related qualification routes can easily be adopted by MainFrame managing agencies and their trainees can fully benefit from vocational qualifications set within the broader framework of training that the MainFrame project seeks to develop.

Reservations have been expressed as to whether MainFrame should continue to engage in such conversion work. Some tutors in the LEAs suggested that it would be easier if they adopt rather than adapt the industry-preferred schemes and use their modules and forms of assessment. For those who have to deliver the scheme — particularly college tutors teaching the nationally preferred scheme to other students and trainees in the same class as MainFrame trainees, the lack of fit and duplication of paperwork is a major concern. The demands of nationally preferred schemes have increasingly posed problems for the project. Some of them, such as the Hairdressing Training Board, Caterbase, and the Administrative, Business and Commercial Training Group (ABC), fit quite well, from the curricula point of view, with existing and new MainFrame modules. The Road Transport Industry Training Board's (RTITB) preferred scheme was assimilated by MainFrame, but with some difficulty. Other schemes, such as the Construction Industry Training Board's and the Engineering Industry Training Board's, fit uneasily alongside MainFrame modules.

However, the MainFrame Management Committee has supported the following arguments:



- MainFrame is committed to establishing a common framework for assessing occupational competence; this is axiomatic for its existence.
- Awarding 'dispensations' for various schemes not to use a common format would result in a mess and a strong centripetal tendency in the project.
- The project is seeking to establish a unit credit transfer system; any such system requires a common currency. In MainFrame *this currency lies in the modular format*, whereas no common currency yet exists for the approved qualifications.
- The MainFrame modular form facilitates the design and delivery of training programmes which integrate a comprehensive range of programme purposes, clear levels of attainment, personal effectiveness, core skills, and so on, to meet individual trainee requirements and possibilities for progression; the same is not yet true of nationally preferred materials.
- MainFrame assessment procedures are considerably more compact and flexible in use than some nationally preferred scheme materials.
- A common format greatly eases the development of staff skills in the design and implementation of programmes.

In addition, it is now becoming apparent that not all nationally preferred schemes are well received locally for a range of reasons, and on occasions MainFrame programmes appear more acceptable. An example of this is in the area of hotels and catering. One northern brewery has looked to the nationally preferred scheme (Caterbase) for the basis of its staff training but, being unhappy with what it found, has now become an associate member of the MainFrame project in order to access the MainFrame modules (see Box 8).

#### COMPATIBILITY WITH NCVQ

The Review of Vocational Qualifications (RVQ) proposed that vocational qualifications should be brought within a new national framework to be called the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), and that a National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) be established to develop the framework.<sup>14</sup> From the Training Agency's point of view, qualifications will need to be compatible with the overall framework and definition of vocational qualification as proposed by RVQ, and will include assessment of:

- skills to specified standards;
- relevant knowledge and understanding;
- the ability to use skills and apply knowledge and understanding to the performance of relevant tasks.

The MainFrame project has obviously had to watch these developments with interest, and indeed have had NCVQ representation on the committee to ensure that the project is fully

<sup>14</sup> *Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales: A Report by the Working Group*, HMSO, April 1986.



informed of progress being made and identify potential problems of linking the MainFrame scheme to such a framework.

#### FEU COMMENTARY

Having sketched out the basic elements of the MainFrame modular design for credit accumulation, it is necessary to provide a critical commentary in the context of FEU's analysis of the issues involved in modularisation.

#### DEGREES OF PRESCRIPTION

Modular schemes cover a wide spectrum, from those where awards are given for single free-standing modules, through schemes where programmes can be relatively freely constructed from modules, to a situation where modules are prescribed. The greater the degree of prescription the more easily they may be standardised according to national criteria, but then the opportunity to provide customised or individual training packages is reduced. In MainFrame, the degree of prescription varies from one occupational sector to another. In some occupations there are so few modules that there is little choice. The fact that model programmes have been only very recently developed suggest that, prior to this, there was a larger degree of freedom in tailoring individual training packages. Even model programmes are expected to provide only the bare bones of a training programme which can be tailored to individual needs. However, one of the criticisms made of MainFrame modules during the first year of the evaluation is that they tend to be too prescriptive. This did not refer only to the choice of modules, but to the content as well. Some college tutors and workplace supervisors reported feeling constrained by the competence statements listed in each module.

#### PROGRAMME PHILOSOPHY

If there is too little prescription in the choice of modules, vocational qualifications may comprise a relatively arbitrary collection of modules. Alternatively, if programmes have a distinct philosophy, this will influence the way modules are put together. MainFrame does have a curricular philosophy. In identifying different programme purposes, individual training programmes should be put together in a coherent and balanced way. In addition, other elements which address core and transferable skills and personal effectiveness are built into programmes, reflecting the programme philosophy. The fact that MainFrame partners do not simply adopt nationally preferred schemes or national qualifications routes for YTS programmes confirms that their programme is informed by a particular philosophy. This stresses quality and breadth in programmes and ensures — without emphasising the distinction between education and training — that broader educational elements are always included in training programmes to avoid providing purely vocational programmes.

The introduction of two-year YTS brought an increased emphasis on measures to improve equal opportunities. Each ATO has had to demonstrate a positive commitment to equality of opportunity, monitoring participation rates of young women and disabled and ethnic minority young people. In addition to

providing for open access, awarding bodies will need to ensure that no overt or covert discriminatory practices in regard to gender, race or those with special needs are built into the specifications of the qualification or its assessment procedures. There should be no compulsory requirement for a period of pre-entry employment, and there should be special provision to ensure the right to equality of opportunity with regard to assessment methods. Such concerns for equal opportunities are supported by the Training Agency and FEU.

In the process of designing training plans for all trainees, including those with special needs, the MainFrame modular structure facilitates the meeting of other individual needs, particularly those that address equal opportunities. All partners in MainFrame has adopted its own councils' equal opportunities policies and been keen to demonstrate that this is more than a token gesture and actually carried out in practice. MainFrame does not have its equal opportunities policy as each partner is left to respond to its own local situation.

#### CUMULATIVE CREDIT AND CREDIT TRANSFER

Perhaps the main potential of a modular system lies in the relative ease of establishing a unit credit transfer system. Modules can be accredited towards a larger award. When modules are free-standing, that is, independent of the larger award, the issue of credit currency is somewhat simpler than where modules are part of a contemporary, cohesive and strongly designed programme. One of the difficulties that will be created through the industry lead bodies' nationally preferred schemes is that their modular systems are largely of the latter type and, having been produced independently of each other, common currency between them will be problematic. MainFrame has therefore invested some time in translating nationally preferred scheme modules into their own format to facilitate a common unit of currency necessary for a successful unit credit transfer system, which is one of its goals.

It is envisaged, by FEU, that ultimately a national modular system could be devised to allow for credit transfer between awards as well as within them. At present, the only obvious one for credit transfer between bodies is GCSE subjects. There are essentially four kinds of credit transfer:

- alternatives to the conventional school-leaving qualifications required for initial entry into higher education;
- entry with exemption from some part of the course because of higher qualifications or experience;
- entry to shortened courses designed specifically for those with prior qualifications or experience;
- transfer, on successful completion of part or all of a course, to a higher level course.<sup>15</sup>

As RVQ identified, there is difficulty in 'individual achievement certified by one part of the system to be recognised by other parties or parts of the system'. In this domain the experience of MainFrame has much to offer, especially as its modular system is

<sup>15</sup> 'Educational Credit Transfer', *ECCETIS Handbook 1988*, ECCETIS, 1988

embedded more widely in WRFE, ET and other areas of FE, including academic qualifications (see Box 4).

Moreover, there has been an increasing trend towards recognition within MainFrame. This could mean that local networks are established to collaborate on the accreditation of common units of competence. This would be more likely to meet the requirements of local employers than any attempt to produce a national system. At the time of writing, a London-wide system of credit transfer based on a consortium of training organisations and colleges of FE using the MainFrame modules is under scrutiny. In the Merseyside area there is the possibility of the Wirral Metropolitan College and Liverpool LEA being joined by Knowsley and Sefton LEAs to provide a regional credit transfer system on a more formal basis than any previous arrangements.

#### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

A doubt that appeared to be significant for many college tutors, scheme instructors and liaison officers was the relationship between the MainFrame assessment system and impending NVQs. The MainFrame project was established and progressed in advance of NCVQ, and therefore could only make educated guesses as to which direction that was likely to take vocational qualifications. As will be discussed in the next section, there is not too much distance between the MainFrame system of assessment and that recommended by NCVQ.

#### COSTS OF ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

A separate statement or certificate of competence is required for each module of accreditation. Some form of external quality control or moderation is necessary, and the more complex the assessment the more moderation will be required. More certification is thus inevitable with a modular system, and probably more assessment. This will add to the costs of running a scheme, as the MainFrame partners have already found out.

#### TEACHING AND LEARNING

FEU research on modularisation has presented evidence that when courses are constructed from modules, teaching and learning processes also become 'modularised'<sup>16</sup>. The cross-linkage between modules that is essential for complete understanding and or transfer may be missing unless the modules are integrated in some way. In some sense, there is tension between modular and integrated deliveries, as demonstrated within BTEC courses. Furthermore, the same research demonstrated a reduction in the amount of practical work due to shorter time periods allocated to modules; the specification of modules in terms of objectives required tutors to think more analytically about the ways in which they organised and assessed them. There is a tendency for small modules, combined with an emphasis on outcomes, to pressurise tutors into concentrating on the more 'teachable' areas and skills and neglect processes. These issues are being investigated through the Credit Accumulation Project (see Box 3).

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<sup>16</sup> *Curriculum Change — An Evaluation of TEC Programme Development in Colleges*, FEU, December 1981

The RVQ definition of modules differentiates between modules of accreditation and learning. This is making the distinction between specifying the modular outcomes and its delivery methods. As NCVQ has adopted a policy whereby the outcomes of modules (that is, standards) are independent of the mode of delivery, this will allow a variety of delivery methods which can be effective in meeting particular outcomes. But, as indicated in the previous paragraphs, the modularisation of outcomes may inevitably impact on the delivery system. There can never be complete independence of delivery and outcomes.

Many practitioners would incorporate methods and modes of assessment within the overall learning strategy. Profiling and continuous assessment are often viewed as parts of the delivery, especially where they provide formative assessment. The MainFrame modular delivery system has been developed to place as much stress on formative assessment as outcomes, which is reflected by their modules attempting to record formative and summative assessment. In this way, process remains important and the adoption of MainFrame modules requires the adoption of the MainFrame delivery system. It would be very problematic for any training organisation merely to buy into the MainFrame module bank without taking cognisance of the concomitant delivery system. Furthermore, outcomes are not merely vocational. MainFrame modules may also be of a general nature, and the delivery and assessment procedures also include non-modular outcomes in the area of core skills, transferable skills and personal effectiveness.

#### ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

The delivery of a modular system of training requires a supportive and flexible administration in the providing organisations. The implications of delivering the MainFrame YTS modular system for organisational and administrative support will be discussed shortly, but the crucial point to note is that a flexible curriculum framework requires flexible institutional arrangements if it is to be delivered effectively. From the trainees' perspective, confronted with a modular system, a crucial fact is the degree of guidance and counselling they receive from agency officers and on- and off-the-job tutors. The adequacy of the degree of counselling and guidance within the MainFrame partners will now be reviewed in terms of the implementation of the MainFrame design framework.

### DELIVERING THE MAINFRAME MODULAR SYSTEM

According to Training Agency requirements, each ATO must submit its training plans to the Local Area Boards for approval. These plans should be drawn up following consideration of local training needs and liaison with other providers. Training plans should indicate:

- what trainees will be able to do at the end of the scheme;
- who will be responsible for training;
- where the various part of the training will take place;
- the induction programme;
- the pattern of attendance for off-the-job training, e.g. day or block release;
- the broad outline of scheme content (but not detailed syllabus);
- the skill learning opportunities available in planned work experience;
- how the planned work experience will be integrated with off-the-job training/education.

In accordance with this requirement, the MainFrame collaborative programme initially designed two training plan summaries:

- A — for the on-the-job training programme
- B — for the off-the-job training programme

These proformas allowed most of the information required for individual training programmes to be recorded. Because of the complexity of recording all the competence statements on such a document, the modules to be covered were listed. Each trainee file kept by the managing agent should have contained the modules listed, which was updated at regular intervals by the trainee's liaison officer. The FEU evaluation found that the use of both training plans was extensive only in Bedfordshire. Furthermore, it was discovered that separate training plans for on- and off-the-job training did not assist integration. Subsequently, a working party has recommended that these training plans be abandoned in favour of a single large sheet — the Training Inventory (see Appendix 2) — a central record of all the achievements of a trainee.

Staff involved with MainFrame should have been issued with a handbook giving guidance on writing training plans. In fact, the evaluation revealed that very few of the staff interviewed had or used this handbook, a consequence being that a wide variety of practices were noted across the collaborating authorities. This handbook points out that young people will come to the scheme by various means and with differing strengths and interests, and that three factors need to be borne in mind when forming programmes:

- the young person;
- work experience and training;
- off-the-job education and training.

The staff handbook is in the process of being rewritten to update staff and tighten procedures regarding the implementation of MainFrame's modular system; this will be vital if the delivery of a modular credit accumulation system is to be consistent and coherent.

#### INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

From the FEU perspective, the test of the MainFrame provision is how far the collaborating agencies have been able to design individual programmes in accordance with the above criteria. If it has been successful, it should be able to demonstrate:

- trainee centredness and participation;
- equal opportunities;
- meeting individual educational and training needs.

#### TRAINEE CENTREDNESS AND PARTICIPATION

Participative or trainee-centred learning was not included in the first YTS framework, but was subsequently introduced to indicate the recommended form or style of learning for YTS. It is seen as a process in which trainees learn by doing and join in decision making about their programmes. In the workplace, there is much evidence in MainFrame programmes that trainees learn through doing. They are most often engaged in what might be called 'real' work as opposed to simulated work experience; modules are used appropriately and are relevant to the tasks. These encourage a learning-by-doing approach. However, there was less evidence of this in off-the-job training, except in practical subjects. It would appear that traditional approaches to student learning were typical, though a number of good practices were identified where college tutors designed assignments that involve trainees. Colleges are often constrained by such factors as class size, accommodation, resources and timetabling, and these inhibit flexibility in teaching and learning styles.

In the evaluation findings there was little evidence to suggest that the MainFrame design framework encouraged a trainee-centred approach or participation in their own programme design. Most trainees, for example, agreed that their training programme had been discussed with them, but not negotiated with them in a participative way. There is a national trend towards encouraging trainee participation in programme reviews. From the Training Agency's perspective, trainee participation in programme review is vital as they are the consumers of the training and can give information about its strengths and weaknesses. In addition:

- It will give them a strong feeling of it being THEIR scheme.
- This in itself will increase motivation.
- It will encourage participative learning.
- It will help in the development of personal effectiveness.
- Trainee views on the quality of training and the scheme in general are essential in considering improvements.<sup>1</sup>

A national initiative on increasing trainee participation in programme review meetings is based on a need identified

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<sup>1</sup> *Developing Effective Programme Review*, MSC, November 1987



through informal discussions with trainees who indicated, despite preparation for programme review meetings, that they were eager to be involved more actively<sup>2</sup>. This contrasts with the FEU evaluation of MainFrame which found little interest among trainees in participating in programme reviews, the general feeling that they had little influence on their own YTS provision, and not being inclined to want more influence.

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

As well as designing training plans for those with special needs, MainFrame has tried to facilitate the meeting of other individual needs, particularly those that address equal opportunities. All three managing agents have adopted their council's equal opportunities policies and been keen to demonstrate that this has been more than a token gesture and is actually carried through in their practice. MainFrame does not have its own equal opportunities policy, but again managing agents have been left to respond to their local situations.

The adoption of Bedfordshire's equal opportunities policy by the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group required the managing agency to demonstrate a positive commitment to equal opportunities. In particular, the agency has been seeking to:

- keep a record relating to gender, ethnic origin and disability of trainees entering its scheme;
- periodically review the numbers and proportions of young people, in terms of gender, ethnic groups and disability, considered for, offered and accepting training places;
- take steps to encourage applications where such reviews indicate that young people from these groups are under-represented;
- check that the reasons for under-representation are not due to direct or indirect discrimination and, where such practices are identified, change them immediately;
- continuously review their modular programmes to check whether particular groups are under-represented in specific occupational areas and, if so, take positive action to redress the balance;
- monitor the equal opportunities practice of workplace providers.

All workplace providers have had an equal opportunities statement included in their contract, and providers have had to sign to confirm that they will not discriminate in any way. Trainees on the scheme have a statement in their training agreement regarding the agency's commitment to equal opportunities. This does not mean, however, that all employers and/or workplace supervisors and trainees abide by such statements.

The authority has an Equal Opportunities Development Officer, funded by the Training Agency, to research, identify issues,

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<sup>2</sup> See 'Meeting the Needs of Trainee Participants' in *Youth Training News*, No. 46, May 1988, p. 13.

suggest and implement ways of overcoming difficulties, evaluate success and disseminate findings (see Box 9). A second project set up in Bedfordshire in September 1986, funded by the Training Agency, focused on women's opportunities in YTS in the authority, with the primary aim of increasing those opportunities and attainments in initial training and employment within YTS. It also sought to broaden job and career horizons for young women and test the potential of the modular credit system for improving access and reducing stereotypes (see Box 10).

The objectives of HESTA include:

- promoting positive action within training programmes where young people from black ethnic minority communities are traditionally under-represented;
- developing training opportunities for young women in non-traditional skill areas;
- promoting opportunities for young people with physical and learning disabilities.

In its capacity as managing agent, HESTA has formally adopted the recommendations of the Commission for Racial Equality as set out in their leaflet *Equal Opportunities and the Youth Training Scheme*.

Like Bedfordshire, Haringey's programme development team has been collecting data on ethnic minority participation in their schemes. Although there is still some way to go to ensure more equal participation within the scheme of the borough's ethnic minority communities, they are confident that their credibility is well established. It was discovered by the programme review team that ethnic minorities (whom they defined as all ethnic groups other than 'UK European') were less well represented in particular schemes than in the agency's workshops as a whole. This situation has been continually monitored and action has been taken to remedy any inequalities identified through their monitoring programme. Various staff-development activities have been geared towards raising race awareness issues within YTS.

One response to the perceived inequalities in the distribution of ethnic minorities across occupational areas has been a scheme within YTS run by the local authority to train young people for permanently established clerical posts in a range of services. This has been operating since 1983, but has come under the umbrella of HESTA only since September 1987, taking over responsibility from the council's Economic Development Unit. The scheme has a strong commitment to taking on trainees from black ethnic minorities, as well as young people with disabilities, with three main aims:

- to provide a high-quality training scheme;
- to increase significantly the number of trainees who progress to permanently established posts within the council;
- to maintain the commitment to equal opportunities upon which the scheme is based.

Targets have been set for the recruitment of trainees with disabilities and from black and ethnic minority groups, being 25% and 60% respectively. All applicants are sent a 'candidate specification' and details about the 'assessment exercises' (practical tests in numeracy, literacy, filing skills and so on). They are informed that all applicants who obtain satisfactory results on the tests, and all young people with disabilities, will be interviewed. The council has been committed to finding suitable posts for trainees who successfully complete the scheme. Targeting places towards young people from black and ethnic minorities and those with disabilities have helped the local authority realise the equal opportunities policy it has adopted.

In addition to concern for equal opportunities for ethnic minorities, women are encouraged, at their interviews, to consider entering non-traditional training programmes. Haringey ITeC has piloted women-only groups in Electrical and Computing programmes (see Box 11).

As with the other two collaborating managing agencies, Sheffield Hallmark has adopted its city council's equal opportunities policy and committed itself to staff development and monitoring its practice in this respect. The agency has recently completed an analysis of entrants and leavers during 1986-87, covering race, gender, status and TOC. Overall, it was discovered that black trainees' representation in Hallmark is greater than the proportion of black people in Sheffield's population. However, further analysis shows that a high proportion of these are to be found in premium places, mainly in one community project and the Sheffield ITeC. It was also noted that early leaving rates among black trainees are lower than for Hallmark trainees as a whole.

Hallmark has temporarily appointed an equal opportunities support and development worker whose task is to concentrate on issues relevant to race, including monitoring, publicity and recruitment, and contacts with local black community groups with which links have been developed.

**Box 9**  
**BEDFORDSHIRE ETHNIC MINORITIES**  
**PROJECT**

The authority has had an Equal Opportunities Development Officer in post, funded by the Training Agency, to research, identify issues, suggest and implement ways of overcoming difficulties, evaluate their success and disseminate these findings. In particular, this project aims to:

- explore the stereotypes and perceptions young people have of YTS;
- examine information provision and presentation;
- encourage young people to take a proactive approach to YTS and employment;
- combat prejudice by developing a wider understanding of young people's needs, pointing out bad practice and emphasising good;
- promote and safeguard equality of opportunity for ethnic minority young people in all aspects of their programme.

The project started from the premise that young people were not applying to join programmes in the numbers expected. Work in the first year was concerned with reasons for low participation. It was found that while some individuals and organisations subscribed to the principles of equality, there was very little evidence initially of the positive commitment necessary to realise equality of opportunity. Several areas of concern were highlighted. Young people were not generally making informed career decisions; for example, they were not making multiple applications and therefore had limited choice; frequently their applications were too late for employer-led schemes. There was limited awareness of the opportunities available within YTS. There were problems for youngsters with English as a second language, and YTS was not perceived as being successful in finding employment for those who had completed their training.

The project set about looking positively at:

- the way in which schools helped young people realise their potential and make choices on opportunities at 16+;
- the presentation and availability of appropriate YTS information;
- the type of support available to young people from the Careers Service in its counselling and placing role;
- the way in which statements about equality of opportunity in YTS are being put into practice by the Training Agency and training organisations;
- the strength of parental and cultural influence on young people making career choices and how the different agencies appreciate this.

As a result, various working groups have been set up to help improve procedures and implement recommendations.

This project has been based with the local authority's Careers Service and is responsible for YTS on a county-wide basis although it works closely with Bedfordshire Youth Training Group. The project has worked with all local managing agents to improve recruitment and selection onto YTS. This included advising them on marketing their programmes to ethnic minority communities, which sometimes involved the translation of YTS material into various languages. It has also developed an equal opportunity framework, using Bedfordshire Youth Training Group as a model to show that equal opportunities can be positively promoted on YTS. This will eventually be recommended to other managing agencies. The interim findings of this project were presented in September 1986.

### **Box 10**

## **BEDFORDSHIRE WOMEN'S PROJECT**

Another project set up in Bedfordshire in September 1986, funded by the Training Agency, focused on opportunities for women in YTS in the authority, with the primary aim of increasing those opportunities and attainments in initial training and employment within YTS. It also sought to broaden job and career horizons for young women and test the potential of the modular credit system for improving access and reducing stereotypes. The project objectives were:

- to provide wider opportunities for sampling prior to occupational choice;
- to market the opportunities in terms meaningful to trainees;
- to expand the range of experiences and attainments emanating from chosen training programmes into those relating to unconventional jobs and career routes;
- to demonstrate areas of commonality and difference in competences between a selection of jobs strongly associated with either men or women;
- to negotiate, with employers, offers of immediate or deferred employment to female trainees, demonstrating the competences identified as matching the jobs available;
- to incorporate the competences which give young women greater opportunity within the modular credit system;
- to identify and highlight modules which facilitate greater opportunity;

- to design and deliver experiences and training by approaches supportive of young women;
- to develop guidelines for programme design and certification to fulfil the Training Agency's objectives for equality of opportunity.

The focus of the project has been on groups of approximately 12 women in three occupational sectors — Business and Administration, Science, and Information Technology. These three groups of 12 women were selected from the 1987-1988 intake, with the co-operation of the careers and liaison officers. Existing training modules and vocational qualification courses were reviewed and, where appropriate, new ones have been devised using the DACUM technique. The researchers examined existing modules in the MainFrame bank and found that, out of 635 checked, only five needed amending in terms of their use of gender-biased language. Their advice has been incorporated in the writing of later modules.

The intention was that the standard scheme would operate for these women but with specific extra elements integrated into their training programmes during the induction period which would be extended from one to two weeks; they would receive support throughout. These trainees may have been offered additional modules which would be within the same general area of work but provide an extension to the traditional pattern of training. In this way, and through the considered use of the module system, it is hoped that there would be increased flexibility and breadth of experience.

### **Box 11**

## **HARINGEY'S WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY PROJECT**

A joint LQI with Camden ITeC on 'Young Women and Information Technology' has enabled Haringey ITeC to continue this work. This was a one-year action research project which attempted to change the pattern of severe under-representation of young women in the 'hard' areas of information technology such as programming, computer operations and electronics in the two ITeCs. Its starting point was that overall participation routes in ITeCs showed a 23% female ratio. The gender bias was very noticeable in curriculum choice, with most female trainees in office work and males in electronics. The basic objectives of the project were:

- to identify and prioritise the needs of various occupational categories offered by the two ITeCs in the context of equal opportunities;
- to develop specific strategies to meet these needs;
- to assist college, training workshop staff and workplace supervisors to implement programmes which will facilitate equal opportunities in target areas;

- to produce a range of material — such as modules, assignments and advertisements aimed at young women — to encourage them into IT areas where they are currently under-represented.

It is reported that there were many positive outcomes from the project:

- Links were established with schools and Haringey ITeC, and they intend running open days for young women on a regular basis.
- The Careers Service responded positively to the need for improvement in advice young women were receiving, and intend to run staff development sessions.
- It became clear that young women enjoyed the work they did in the 'hard' area of IT, but made career decisions based on their perception of the opportunities that exist in the labour market, which are sometimes incorrect.

The final report on this project has recently been published.

Although it does not tell the whole story, the funding classifications of premium and PAFD have been useful in giving an indication of the number of young people in two-year YTS who have special needs, and also for providing additional funding for meeting individual trainees' special needs. The additional funding was not unqualified support for the managing agents but should have enabled all trainees with special needs to benefit from YTS by ensuring that they were in an appropriate scheme and their training programme and environment closely matched their needs.

In practice, however, this has not been straightforward since procedures for identifying special training needs were far from satisfactory. Indeed, from April 1989 they are subject to revision following a funding review undertaken by the Training Agency. One of the reasons for the new structure is to underpin the Training Agency's special training needs strategy by allowing greater flexibility in the range of needs catered for<sup>1</sup>. Where handicaps are severe, more information has usually been available from specialist agencies; but for the great majority of trainees in need of additional funding or support in order to derive most benefit from YTS, information about their special needs has often been inaccessible when they began their YTS training, and it has therefore been difficult to negotiate a training programme that best fits their needs.

The problem has been compounded by there being little consensus on the definition of special needs. Included in the range of disabilities and disadvantages of young people categorised as having special needs have been physical and sensory disabilities and some medical conditions, severe and moderate learning difficulties, language disorders, and emotional and behavioural difficulties.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, such difficulties tend to be of a multiple nature, are often linked with serious social, family and economic problems, and have already contributed to underachievement at school, with associated damage to motivation and self-image.

Much concern with special needs in FE is about access and entry into a training course to ensure that all young people who could benefit do so to their full potential. Within two-year YTS, managing agents have been encouraged to design individual programmes that meet this objective. Although MainFrame has not specifically developed a distinctive and common strategy, all the collaborating managing agents have made special efforts to respond to special needs within their modular system.

For example, Bedfordshire LEA has been committed to the idea of special needs provision since the operation of its 450-place Mode B2 pilot in 1982. With the introduction of a Mode A consortium scheme in 1983, a need for integration was identified

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the review and proposals see 'The YTS Funding Review' in *Youth Training News*, no.50, November 1988, pp.6-8

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the general opportunities for meeting special educational needs in FE, see FEU documents, *A College Guide: Meeting Special Educational Needs*, Longman for FEU, 1986, and *Special Needs Occasional Papers 1-7*, Longman for FEU, 1986-89



and has been developed, with the emergence of two-year YTS with a more structured approach to the curriculum and delivery. Development work has been supported through the secondment to the LEA of a tutor for special needs to contribute to the formulation and implementation of a post-16 special needs policy. This has included the establishment of a YTS Special Needs Support Group which involves the Training Agency, the Careers Service, the LEA, the county's four colleges, and the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group managing agency. The use of sampling for special needs trainees was singled out by the TSAS review as a special strength of Bedfordshire's scheme. Entry into and progression from the scheme can also be more adequately and equitably mapped against previous and possible training, education and employment opportunities.

There was no community project or training workshop for special needs youngsters within the LEA's YTS provision. Rather, they are integrated into the normal training programmes. However, there has been, for premium-funded and PAFD trainees, a special programme referred to as Beds Into Work, housed in one of the county's four colleges. This developed a training programme that allowed special needs trainees to spend longer periods in off-the-job training, especially early in their YTS programme and, if necessary, to engage in simulated work experience rather than actual work placements, where a supportive environment and integrated programme could be guaranteed. Typically, premium-funded youngsters spent their initial six weeks on the scheme in off-the-job training before their workplacement needs were assessed.

A particular problem in Bedfordshire has been finding sufficient sympathetic and adequate workplacements for trainees with special needs. Sometimes such trainees could find themselves in inappropriate placements because they happened to be the only ones available at the time and it was considered preferable to give a special needs trainee any work experience than the alternative authorised leave of absence. This may however create longer term problems since sympathetic employers may become less sympathetic and more cynical if, for example, a youngster keen on catering is placed in a retail outlet and shows little enthusiasm for that work. The problem was initially compounded by the fact that, frequently, liaison officers responsible for special needs trainees do not have adequate experience or sufficient time to give the necessary level of support to both trainees and employers in this situation. However, Bedfordshire Youth Training Group recognised this and has taken it into account in restructuring the agency, placing overall responsibility on a senior liaison officer.

Like the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group, Haringey is concerned with meeting special needs. In its equal opportunities policy, HESTA seeks to promote opportunities for young people with physical and learning disabilities and has become a major provider of training opportunities for young people with learning difficulties. The introduction of the Alternative Route for CPVE provides certification for all trainees, regardless of ability. Providing access to YTS for young people with physical disabilities has been more of a problem. The Haringey IT Centre is located on the second floor of an old school building and has

no access for the physically disabled; Haringey Training Centre, similarly, has no access for the physically disabled to the first floor of its premises. The centre has sought advice from the disablement team at the Department of Employment on how to improve access. It has been recognised that the only long-term solution may be to seek alternative premises within the borough. Nevertheless, disabled persons have been welcomed on all four of Haringey's schemes which cater for those with severe physical and mental disabilities and the hearing impaired.

Like Bedfordshire and Sheffield, Haringey has been able to appoint a number of communicators for the deaf on their schemes. During the past two years, Haringey ITeC has had a number of partially deaf trainees with sickle cell anaemia. Haringey Training Workshop has had registered disabled trainees, including one with spina bifida and another profoundly deaf. Also like Bedfordshire, the Programme Development Team has been collecting trainee statistics and other research data to monitor entrants with disabilities and special needs. These statistics have been periodically reviewed and, where there have been problems, highlighted positive action has been taken.

In Sheffield, the two community projects, YTS training workshop and Sheffield ITeC have been established with briefs to focus on the needs of socially disadvantaged young people. They have made full use of premium funding to offer trainees:

- a 'sheltered' training environment within which to prepare for work-placements with local employers;
- better staffing ratios which enable them to receive tuition in small groups, and sometimes one-to-one;
- high levels of personal support and a strong emphasis upon guidance and counselling;
- individual training programmes which allow them to sample a range of occupational areas and progress at their own pace;
- extra help with basic skills, including literacy and numeracy.

Each of the five colleges of FE (before tertiary reorganisation) had undertaken initiatives to integrate the disabled and those with special learning needs within its overall provision and these have been used to support the special educational needs of YTS trainees. Non-YTS students from foundation or bridge courses were fed into YTS courses, and three of the colleges had dedicated 'special needs' YTS courses for the physically, and some mentally, handicapped trainees, as well as those with learning and/or behavioural difficulties. A fourth FE college hosted the FE service for the hearing impaired and was able to provide a service for all hearing-impaired trainees within the agency, under PAFD arrangements. Efforts were made to assist special needs trainees to progress on to other YTS programmes within the same college, or with another partner in the agency.

To support its work with YTS trainees with special educational needs, Sheffield City Council has developed a number of LQIs with the Training Agency. The local ATC is piloting work with a number of managing agencies in the area, including Hallmark, aimed at developing work-experience placements for hard-to-

place trainees. This project has been featured in *Youth Training News*<sup>7</sup>. Another ATC initiative has been working with the local careers service and the FE service for the hearing impaired to train a pool of communicators for hearing impaired YTS trainees. In addition, Hallmark agency initiated a programme of remedial tuition on literacy and numeracy skills which sought to identify resources, develop appropriate on-the-job support and evaluate implications for staff training. All these LQIs have improved the programme and support for YTS trainees with special needs.

Two-year YTS has begun to show the capacity of the modular system to provide meaningful units of credit for young people whose attainments are slower to emerge and thus accumulated over longer periods. The identification of competences within modules and the CPVE framework has helped increase trainee motivation and assists workplace supervisors and off-the-job trainers to structure a progressive and coherent training programme for each individual.

#### TRAINING PLANS

In theory, MainFrame's curriculum framework provides a basis for individual training plans. This requires that work experience placements be identified and recorded in terms of the opportunities they give for training and attainment. These should be matched against the bank of modules and a potential list of modules for use (either partially or totally) in that workplace drawn up. The constraints of the workplace in terms of the opportunities it can provide, and when, needs also to be noted (for example, seasonal factors). However, in actuality there is often a problem of obtaining sufficient and appropriate work placements, and this occasionally means that modules are not negotiated or, in a few instances, used at all. Typically, employers and workplace supervisors feel that the selection of appropriate modules is done by agencies' liaison officers. Trainees rarely feel they have had much say in this process. There was little evidence of trainee-centred negotiation over the content of their training programmes.

Off-the-job opportunities should be recorded in terms of the learning experiences they offer and the qualifications or credits to which this can lead. These should be matched against the bank of modules and a potential list of modules for use (either partially or totally) in off-the-job training drawn up. The constraints of off-the-job training location and the sequences which govern learning should be noted. In practice, typically off-the-job training is led by the pre-existing national qualification syllabuses and modules are selected on the basis of their fit with these qualifications. In many instances, modules have been derived from these syllabuses and therefore there is a match between them. However, in such cases, off-the-job tutors typically complain about duplication of paperwork. In cases where trainees are not entered for a national qualification, or where they are not likely to pass, the modules do, however, provide a systematic and comprehensive record of achievement.

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<sup>7</sup> 'Recruiting Trainees with Disabilities', *Youth Training News*, No. 48, July/August 1988, pp 14-15

To plan training programmes for individual trainees, three sets of criteria have to be applied:

- the trainee's entitlements, needs, strengths and interests;
- the YTS framework which requires the delivery of the four outcomes;
- additional scheme-quality criteria, such as breadth, balance, progression opportunities, etc., and application of the core checklist.

The minimum number of modules each trainee must cover each year has also to be considered.

This application of the three criteria invariably lead to additional modules being required and negotiated with on- and off-the-job providers, in addition to those specific to the workplacement or national qualification. Further, the selection of modules will be influenced by equal opportunities policies. In addition to looking at breadth and balance, the agencies are all concerned to ensure equal opportunities. This may in some cases require taking positive action in favour of gender or ethnic groups, which will affect the negotiation of their programme.

These steps should lead to a list of modules which can be entered on a training plan or the new training inventory. This formation should be done by arranging the modules to ensure:

- essential processes such as induction and initial assessment take place;
- there is a logical and efficient accumulation of achievement;
- modules support each other (e.g. theory underlying practice goes alongside role execution);
- modules addressed on- and off-the-job are synchronised;
- the levels of attainment addressed by each module aggregate to a sensible achievement target and a qualification or credit thereto.

The regular reviews with trainees normally result in the need to make an adjustment to the training plan in terms of sequence, need for reinforcement, additional modules, need to address further core competences, etc. Trainees appear to appreciate that this process reflects ATOs' concern for their training and future progression in a caring way. The modular system is designed to facilitate this. On the occasions where this fails to happen, it is generally due to the failure of individual liaison officers or workplace supervisors to implement the system rather than the system itself. These adjustments have to be incorporated in subsequent on- or off-the-job training opportunities, which may require the location of either or both to be varied. There is evidence to show that agencies have been able to respond in this way, although the ideal is constrained by the limitations of the availability of a range of satisfactory work placements.

#### ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW

A distinctive feature of YTS is that guidance and support should not be separated from the assessment and review procedures. Induction, for example, should include an initial assessment of

the needs of trainees. The Training Agency recommend that this takes place within the first four weeks of a trainee's programme, and MainFrame treats this as part of the induction and uses it to identify:

- starting points;
- particular learning needs;
- areas of strength and potentiality.

It is designed in a way that encourages trainees to see that assessment is a supportive activity and that they themselves have an active role to play in the process. In this sense, the trainee is expected to negotiate their training programme and is a key element in the design of the delivery of the scheme.

Equally, continuous assessment, as FEU has recommended<sup>6</sup>, should be supportive and give guidance, fully involve trainees, and be organised at regular intervals. This may depend on the needs of individual trainees, but individual review sessions generally occur every three months, with group reviews taking place between these, usually on off-the-job training sites. In the workplace, informal assessment of trainees may take place on a day-to-day basis, if felt necessary, and both workplace supervisors and off-the-job tutors are supposed to be provided with detailed notes on assessment. Not all of them remember being given these notes.

Assessment is a key element of the training process, to provide a basic and progressive record of trainees' achievements, though, as pointed out, not the sole purpose of reviews. In FEU terms, assessment involves not only the recording of results but also the recording of experiences undergone by the trainee, and an appraisal of the value of those experiences to the trainee. MainFrame has developed procedures to achieve this. Its starting point for YTS assessment is the full set of competence statements developed for YTS programmes.

The process by which assessments are recorded on the module sheets showed some variation, particularly between on- and off-the-job training. This variation is found within as well as across the MainFrame collaborative project, and a working party is attempting to introduce more standardisation into the procedures through staff development programmes. There is evidence in the FEU evaluation that the assessment of competence in both on- and off-the-job training remains, like most forms of assessment, subjective, in spite of using detailed competence objectives. Primarily, the trainee is assessed through observation in and questioning of daily practice, though there are examples to show that specific tests and projects are devised for assessment purposes.

The FEU evaluation has shown that the modules are less used in off-the-job training for assessment. Typically, the modules are marked up by college staff, but they do not appear to do this regularly. This is particularly the case when college staff are following a national qualification course where the assessment

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<sup>6</sup> *Supporting YTS*, 3rd edition, FEU, May 1985, para. 55

requirements of validating bodies are given primacy rather than the training modules. Where these modules have been chosen because of their relevance to the examination course (and in many cases the modules have been derived from such courses), this does not pose too much of a problem, but college staff do not always appreciate the need to complete the module assessment procedures for students who have been entered for these national qualifications. The tendency is to complete the modules at the end of the year rather than regularly update them.

The most commonly reported practice in on-the-job training was the progress made by trainees being negotiated between the trainee, the workplace supervisor and the liaison officer during the quarterly review meeting. During these reviews, typically, trainees will have marked up their progress on their set of modules, the supervisor on another set, and the liaison officer would ensure that an agreed level of achievement is marked on their set of modules, to be transferred to a central record, the Training Inventory (see Appendix 2). This central record has been developed as a response to FEU findings concerning the lack of integration between various parts of the scheme and their assessment, and the amount of paperwork. Although it is not yet clear whether the Training Inventory will be successful in reducing the amount of paperwork, it has already been well received by liaison officers for whom it facilitates the development of a coherent, balanced and integrated programme for each trainee. Constituting a central record, it will also facilitate the completion of the YTS Certificate, as the information on assessment required will be collected continuously on the Training Inventory.

If trainees have identified weaknesses, or work placements have failed to provide them with opportunities to achieve competences, then these are indicated for future action and recorded on the Training Agency's Review Sheet [TFS93]. Generally, these discussions on progress and achievement of competence are based on observations and questioning, although there are instances where workplace supervisors will set trainees specific projects to test their achievement of skills. FEU research indicated some difficulties supervisors had in recognising and measuring the achievement of skill, though it was generally felt that the assessment procedure was effective.

The situation with workplace training would appear to be quite different from that of college-based off-the-job training. Without the same kind of context working against the use of a modular delivery system, workplace supervisors report that a modular training package has influenced the way they approach training, which is now less haphazard and more coherent. However, the key to its success would lie in the overall relevance of training modules to the real world of work, so they can be implemented during the normal course of the working cycle.

In off-the-job training, however, implementation of the system has had certain problems. Where tutors were using modules to organise, plan and deliver training, the same kind of comments were made about the neglect of process in favour of outcomes. However, the evaluation also demonstrated that only a minority used MainFrame modules in this way, and that most - where



they used modules at all - used them as a retrospective checklist for outcomes.

#### GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

This is one of the key features of the design of YTS programmes, and encompasses induction into the scheme. It is agreed that induction is of great value to trainees, assisting in their understanding of the nature and purpose of the programme and their role within it. It also familiarises them with their work environment, helps them understand what off-the-job training they are to receive, makes them familiar with health and safety regulations which apply, and informs them about the general administration of the scheme, including allowances, attendance requirements, procedures to follow, and so on.

Induction is not a once-and-for-all event at the beginning of the programme but covers issues to do with pre-entry (what trainees need to know before they commence with the scheme), on-entry (what they need to know when they first start the scheme), during the scheme (particularly at transitional key stages of their programme), and progression from the scheme. This is achieved in part through the use of a *Trainee's Handbook* covering such topics as how the scheme operates, how to claim allowances and expenses, what to do if absent, relevant information on health and safety, and how trainees' programmes will be put together.

In addition, collaborating managing agents have built formal guidance procedures into the design framework as well as mechanisms for checking that such guidance is taking place. In the FEU evaluation it was found that, in addition to the support and guidance from agencies, trainees often benefited from the colleges' student guidance and careers services while on off-the-job training, and many off-the-job tutors feel that guidance and support is a central part of their role on YTS.

#### PROGRESSION

The emphasis on guidance, support, assessment and review is essential if the overall aim of facilitating progression within and from the scheme is to be achieved. Trainee-centred reviewing is crucial if the individual needs of trainees are to be negotiated and built on within the two-year programme so they benefit and develop as fully as possible. Feedback of formative or progressive assessment is therefore vital for progression within the scheme. Final or summative assessment seeks to ensure that trainees are granted maximum credit for attainments on the scheme, both on- and off-the-job. Assessment and reviews should lead to certification to demonstrate achievement in the four outcomes. For MainFrame the means of measuring achievement in terms of the four outcomes is given in Figure 3. Such achievements are recorded and transferred via the appropriate Training Agency forms to the leaver's certificate and recorded achievements are mapped against existing national qualifications; then progression out of YTS may be facilitated.

The procedure by which trainees are assessed on each module is currently being reviewed. The FEU evaluation discovered a wide variation in practice not only across the collaborating LEAs but within them. Consequently, the project has been reviewing the

basis upon which each trainee is credited with a module. At the time of the research, the criteria were that the trainee should demonstrate achievement at level II (being competent under close supervision) or above in a minimum of 75% of the competence statements on that module.

There has been some discussion in the past about the need for that 75% to include statements considered essential, for example those which cover Health and Safety, but there is no evidence that this has ever happened in practice. The justification for only 75% being required rather than a full 100% seems to have been that some workplaces or colleges were unable to offer certain opportunities, and that the trainee should not be disadvantaged because of this. However, the experience of the C&G six-sector project (see Box 7) shows that this notional 75% is not good enough to satisfy the requirements of validating bodies such as C&G, nor likely to satisfy NCVQ. Thus, in future, for trainees to be credited with being fully competent on a module, they must have demonstrated competence in all statements, at level IV (i.e. competent). Only statements essential to the module should appear, though a category of optional module competence statements covering what the trainee may be required to do can appear on the bottom of some modules for which achievement at level IV will not be necessary. For trainees to be credited with any other level for a module on the YTS Certificate, such as 'competent under general supervision', they must have achieved at that level or above for all statements. There was still some discontent with this; some have argued that trainees can only be competent at level IV. While they may be able to carry out tasks under general supervision, this does not mean they are competent. It has now been agreed by the partners that 'competence' should no longer be used for levels I-III.

#### THE NCVQ PERSPECTIVE

A major concern of staff working in MainFrame has been its relationship with NCVQ. The origins of MainFrame show that this project preceded the establishment of NCVQ and the development of NVQs, although for most of the time MainFrame was developing alongside NCVQ. It was therefore difficult to know exactly which direction MainFrame should take with its unit credit transfer system based on a modular structure. It is clear from NCVQ's tasks outlined above that there is no great distance between it and MainFrame. This is not surprising given that NCVQ has been working very closely with the Training Agency, and the MainFrame assessment and accreditation procedures are in accordance with the Training Agency's requirements. It is clear that MainFrame's modular assessment and accreditation procedures must link with NCVQ if it is to be of national value.

MainFrame is endeavouring to ensure that its modular system can follow qualifications routes that are NCVQ approved, whether they lie with existing national examination bodies such as BTEC, C&G or RSA, or with industry-lead bodies such as RTITB, CITB, and so on. Thus, a MainFrame trainee on YTS could obtain an NVQ through the pursuit of an approved C&G course, or through Caterbase, and so on. But this will inevitably leave gaps which MainFrame is anxious to fill. To be successful,

it will need to tighten up its assessment procedures and make itself more compatible with NCVQ requirements. A number of problems have been identified.

To begin with, trainees could be deemed competent under close or general supervision. This reflects MainFrame's philosophy on assessment that was both formative and summative, wanting to permit the recording of achievements towards competence rather than simply indicating whether a trainee is competent or not. Aware that this loose interpretation of competence would create difficulties in getting their modules considered equivalent to units of competence used by validating bodies operating within the NCVQ framework, MainFrame has endeavoured to tighten up its procedures in assessing and recording competence, so that competence is now confined to the fourth level on MainFrame modules and replaced by the word 'able' on levels II and III.

In raising the issue of the four levels used on MainFrame modules, we come to a further area of confusion with NCVQ. This may be, as much as anything else, another terminological difference between the two. The NVQ framework provides a structure for accredited qualifications which indicates the relationship and routes of progression between them. The four NVQ levels indicate different attainments of competence and each accredited qualification will be assigned to a level within the framework. The allocation of NVQs to levels will relate to the attainment of standards of performance, not to the time taken to achieve them, and will depend on the nature and range of competences specified. Confusingly, MainFrame operates with four levels of assessment of competence within each module, and refers to four levels of standard. It is recognised that the four levels of achievement in MainFrame do not correspond with NCVQ insofar as they are based on existing vocational and pre-vocational qualification routes rather than those approved by NCVQ. As validating bodies change their qualifications to meet the requirements of NVQ, MainFrame's four levels will become increasingly inappropriate. But as this happens, and NCVQ's levels are more widely accepted, MainFrame will adopt them too.

Another difference between MainFrame and NCVQ is their models of assessment. The NVQ is a *statement of competence* which recognises the ability to use skills and apply knowledge within the context defined by the qualification. The statement of competence can be achieved through the accumulation of *units of competence*. According to NCVQ, a unit of competence is the smallest unit worthy of separate accreditation, should be self-standing, and should be recognised and have value in employment. In turn, a unit of competence is made up of *elements of competence*. Elements of competence and associated performance criteria are the building blocks of the NVQs, but in themselves cannot be accredited until they make up a unit of competence.

The MainFrame model of assessment is somewhat similar. Their modules may be considered equivalent to a certain extent to units of competence. Like NCVQ, they have a title, a level and a defined programme purpose, and are made up of competence

statements rather than elements of competence. There are some revealing differences here. For example, apart from the modules derived from the C&G six-sector project, competence statements do not have performance criteria attached. The review of the module bank that is being undertaken, however, will ensure that all modules to be left in the bank do have attached appropriate performance criteria. In addition, the modules have a general competence attached to them to facilitate assessment in the overall module. In addition, MainFrame modules will specify the relevant core skills and the knowledge required to be able to perform the occupational competence. Their translation to a format closer to the NCVQ model appears to be based on the model of assessment used by the Administrative, Business and Commercial Training Group in setting standards of performance for its occupational area.

That the MainFrame model is not too far removed from the NCVQ model is illustrated by the consultancy work that MainFrame is carrying on for the End-User Group of the Information Technology Industry Lead Body (see Box 12). Using a combination of its DACUM procedures and the Training Agency's functional analysis to identify information technology tasks and main duty areas, this MainFrame project has been able to map the results on to the general model of competence prescribed by NCVQ. The main duty areas become elements of competence, which are grouped together into

### **Box 12** **IT END-USER PROJECT**

MainFrame has carried out a consultancy project on behalf of the Information Technology Industry Lead Body's End-User group. Prior to the establishment by the Training Agency of an industry lead body for information technology, MainFrame had signalled its interest in engaging in research in this area of work. When one was eventually set up, it had a sub-group for end-users, which was concerned to discover the ways in which the quality and efficiency of those using information technology could be improved. MainFrame, as a vocational training organisation which has done considerable work in developing a range of work-based programmes, supported its funding application with examples of computer-based modules that had been derived through earlier DACUM sessions, which now lead to nationally recognised qualifications. Successful in their application, they appointed a consultant to undertake the foundation work necessary for the development of end-user IT qualifications. The basis of this was occupational analysis using the DACUM technique, on the following groups of constructive end-users:

- design draughtsmen;
- computer-aided manufacture engineers;
- account clerks;
- personnel officers;
- librarians;
- graphic designers.

Each group has identified the range and standards of competence that cover their occupational area. The sample was checked with a larger number of organisations to verify their accuracy.

The key aims of this project were:

- to define training standards;
- to lay the foundations for the new vocational qualifications.

Some of the outcomes have been:

- a competency model tested by a range of role holders and employers which can be adopted by the Lead Body for its future work;
- an initial group of units of competence covering constructive use of IT.

This project has enabled MainFrame to make progress in three directions. First, it has informed the information technology sector group about the adequacy of existing modules in the module bank, enabling them to identify and fill the gaps and be able to use them with more confidence, knowing that they have been derived from and validated in the workplace, using role holders. Second, because the finance for this project was coming from the Training Agency, it was required that the competency model be acceptable to the NCVQ framework. Thus, this project has illustrated the ways in which MainFrame modules will need to be adapted if they are to satisfy NCVQ and give staff more practice in writing NCVQ-congruent modules. Thirdly, the project enabled MainFrame to pilot the Training Agency's preferred method of competence derivation, known as functional analysis, and to successfully integrate this with DACUM, producing a new technique which is both structured and descriptive.

sensitive units. Elements and units of competence only reveal what is being done in a job, and so standard tasks that need to be performed are also identified by role-holders choosing performance criteria for each element.

The task the MainFrame partners have set themselves with respect to the establishment of a unit credit transfer system, with related assessment and certification, has been an ambitious project and, given the uncertainty in terms of national developments (NCVQ and the products of nationally preferred schemes), has made a major investment of resources in a particular direction. The MainFrame modular structure is not inconsistent with the direction in which NCVQ is going.

#### INTEGRATION

In originally producing *Supporting YTS* and its subsequent revisions, FEU has sought to demonstrate that the further education sector has a role to play in the provision of a quality YTS. The stipulation of a minimum of 20 weeks' off-the-job training has mainly become the norm, except for special needs trainees. MainFrame partners have largely operated within this norm, and have made full use of its further education provision. However, the centralisation of managing agency functions has had an impact on the relationship with colleges, the legacy of which has inhibited rather than promoted the development of the MainFrame system.

One indicator of this may be that the partners have relied too heavily on further education colleges for their off-the-job training, particularly in Bedfordshire where there are no training workshops, community projects, ITECs, or other schemes to act as sites for off-the-job training. One example of this is in the area of induction and initial assessment. Broad guidelines are often provided by the managing agents, but their delivery is largely left to the colleges. Liaison officers are coming to play an increasing role in this process, and there are now examples of pilot in-house inductions which demonstrate advantages over college-based provision, not least the cost factor, but also the increased control and monitoring that managing agents could have over these important elements of YTS. In the TSAS report on Bedfordshire Youth Training Group, there is some indication that the Training Agency would prefer to see more off-the-job training provided in-house by the agency.

Although this is not a reflection on the staff who work in the colleges, there does appear still to be problems in getting staff at the grassroots to be committed to the scheme. This lack of commitment to the modular system was also picked up by the TSAS in their recent monitoring of Bedfordshire Youth Training Group. However, it has to be said that the findings in the 1988 survey show a definite improvement over those found in the first year of the evaluation. There is rather more awareness of how the MainFrame system operates, which in part has come from experience, but the lack of awareness discovered in the interim findings has also been actively taken on board by the managing agencies and by MainFrame itself. There has been increased staff-development activity aimed at the college and scheme tutors which was beginning to take effect. As that was a longer term



process, perhaps one could not realistically expect significant improvement for a year or two.

To operate the MainFrame system requires a team of committed off-the-job tutors. The evaluation has shown that those who spend longer on YTS in their working week tend to be more committed and have more positive attitudes towards the MainFrame system. Moreover, the colleges are now beginning to respond as institutions to the needs of YTS insofar as they have been paying attention to:

- more flexible timetabling;
- extension of the college year;
- new teaching and learning styles;
- opportunities for professional development;
- building team meetings into timetables.

Such developments are necessary if the MainFrame partners are to succeed in providing integrated programmes, which is a requirement of the Training Agency. This issue has emerged as a particular problem with the scheme. In theory the MainFrame delivery system should facilitate integration, but in practice it has been hindered. The role of the liaison officer is crucial to this, as well as the initial use of two separate training plans for on- and off-the-job training hindering their integration. Ultimately, trainees should be encouraged to take responsibility for integrating the parts of their training programme, and time for periods of reflection should be built into their programmes.

In response to this contradiction in their delivery system, the MainFrame Management Group requested that each partner should consider the problems of integrating on- and off-the-job training, and suggest possible solutions. The nature of the problem was identified as:

- There should be a closer fit between modules used in college and other off-the-job contexts and those used in the workplace.
- There should be greater contact, in general, between off- and on-the-job providers.
- Not all tutors had copies of, or access to, on-the-job modules (as few workplace supervisors had knowledge of off-the-job training or qualifications).
- There were felt to be few, and in some cases decreasing, opportunities for tutors to visit the workplace.
- Some tutors felt there had been a lack of consultation in selecting the modules to be used, and that they are at a distance from the review process.

Partners were asked to consider the following questions:

- Are there ways in which workplace supervisors can be given more practical information on trainees' off-the-job training and qualification routes?
- How can we ensure that college tutors have more awareness of what happens at work?



- Should we facilitate more opportunities for tutors to visit the workplace? If so, what role should they have?
- Should some of the liaison officers' tasks be shared with other staff?
- Should our managing agencies be more prescriptive when it comes to the delivery of off-the-job training?
- What are the staff development implications?

The conclusions of this exercise were:

- There is a case for involving workplace supervisors more in the planning of training programmes and thereby making more information concerning off-the-job training available to them. However, this will require college tutors to prepare course leaflets for their off-the-job provision which states aims, objectives, advised entry levels and content in modular form. With this as a basis for discussion it would be reasonable to consult workplace supervisors on the fit between workplace and college provision and the appropriateness of a qualification route.
- The integration of documentation in the form of the training inventory might help to overcome the perceived gap between the two main training contexts. The training inventory initially maintained the separate training plan summaries for on- and off-the-job training. This is now under review.
- The review of the module bank will eventually mean that all modules will have a more descriptive title, and will have incorporated a general competence statement at the head.
- Tutor attendance at college-based reviews should be a requirement.
- There may be more of a joint role for college tutors in some activities, such as recruiting and marketing.
- Programme review team meetings could be made more effective through increased participation of on- and off-the-job training providers.
- Agencies should encourage more joint staff development activities between liaison officers, college staff and, where possible, workplace supervisors.
- Each LEA or agency should consider opportunities to bring college staff into the workplace, for example, by using tutors to train supervisors. Resources might be available from accredited training centres for this activity if it is NCVQ-related. Alternatively, college staff might be encouraged to take up industrial placements or periods of secondment to the training organisations.
- Outreach work by college staff into workshops, projects and ITeCs has proved to be popular and successful in at least one LEA and might be considered elsewhere.
- Above all, there is a clear need to tighten up existing procedures and guidelines. MainFrame is in the process of updating guidelines in the form of a staff handbook. Alongside

this will be required some extensive staff development. Agencies will need to ensure that some kind of moderation is carried out to monitor the implementation of procedures.

Some of these solutions are already in practice in some of the agencies. Other practices might be considered by the other partners. For example, Bedfordshire Youth Training Group has a commitment to the inclusion of at least one work-based assignment within each trainee's programme. The completion of the assignment is monitored by tutors and brings them into closer contact with workplace providers.

Although the MainFrame partners have not fully resolved the contradictions of having liaison officers to facilitate integration, it is clear that the above developments and clarification of their role with respect to college tutors will go some way towards improving the integration of trainees' programmes. It is worth noting that Liverpool LEA has carefully considered the introduction of a centrally organised team of liaison officers and decided to proceed with this, but attaching liaison officers to particular colleges and linked to specific courses as integral members of the course team. College tutors in Liverpool are in favour of the introduction of liaison officers but concerned to maintain a role in the reviewing process in the workplace. Consequently, Liverpool LEA has costed this into their proposals to give tutors time to visit the workplace. Tutors and liaison officers will be required to attend college-based reviews. Sheffield Hallmark is currently considering attaching liaison officers to the new tertiary colleges and schemes.

There are clearly limits on what can be achieved in terms of integration, given the difficulties in finding sufficient appropriate placements for all trainees. Examples of best practice tend to be found in schemes and workshops where work-experience and off-the-job tutors work closely together. It is also good where vocational qualifications require an element of work experience as part of the course. Furthermore, not all employers, workplace supervisors and college and scheme tutors see integration as a desired state of affairs. This is probably a general problem in YTS and not specific to MainFrame. College tutors tend to be more concerned with the breadth of a training programme than its degree of integration.

#### MEETING THE FOUR YTS OUTCOMES

##### OUTCOME 1: COMPETENCE IN A JOB AND/OR RANGE OF OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

It has been said that MainFrame modules are units of assessment and accreditation. Each module may contain up to 25 competence statements against which assessments can be made. Since trainees may already be competent in respect of some statements, and will have major training needs in respect of others, the modular format also provides the means to accredit prior learning and act as an instrument of initial assessment. It was questioned that this, in fact, did happen in practice.

It is possible for trainees to simultaneously demonstrate competence in several tasks using the modular system, but depending on the activities through which assessment takes place.

This may take place in either or both on- and off-the-job training situations.

Using the modules derived from the variety of sources previously outlined, the main assessor in the workplace should be the supervisor. This is a role unfamiliar to most employees and requires training and support from the liaison officer. Evidence from the research suggests that where supervisors lack the confidence to do this, liaison officers do it on their behalf. As an interim measure, to mitigate the worst inconsistencies, the role of liaison officer is crucial here. But they need to bear in mind that each workplace has its own required standards; supervisors are encouraged to negotiate with each trainee exactly what these are, and thereby establish performance criteria. This approach to performance criteria tends against the effective moderation of performance standards across a range of workplaces and will not meet the future requirements of NCVQ.

In addition, each workplace will have expectations about the degree of self-reliance commonly required of an employee in the occupational role. Again, supervisors will need to agree with trainees exactly what these expectations are in order to lay down the realistic degree of independence necessary to attain competence. Without fully committing itself to the idea of templating, MainFrame has recommended that the standard required for activities related to security or Health and Safety does not fall below the third level of achievement in any circumstances; in other cases the standard should reflect actual workplace expectations. With the exception of competences relating to Health and Safety, there is only a rough and ready means of judging occupational competence in the tasks described by a module. As yet, few of the modules in the bank identify the skill and knowledge elements whose ownership underpin the occupational competence. However, it has been observed that pilot work in the C&G six-sector project has produced some generalisable strategies.

The module bank has been reviewed with the following criteria in mind:

- occupational sufficiency (i.e. competences and skills that are occupationally specific and sufficient in themselves to enable trainees to do the job);
- the basis for progression;
- relevance and coherence.

On the latter two, the role of off-the-job training should not be neglected for, as well as broadening the range of opportunities, it is intended to create the necessary level of achievement for progression within and out of YTS. Without a broad interpretation by programme designers of the learning needs which lie behind competence in a job, training programmes may become narrow, short-term, utilitarian and restrictive. The Training Agency has stated that they 'reject the idea of two years of narrow job-specific training'<sup>7</sup>. To achieve this, training plans should not be narrowly restricted to one TOC area. FEU

<sup>7</sup> *Development of the Youth Training Scheme (The Reay Report)*, MSC, July 1985

believes it to be a desirable aim to provide the opportunity for trainees to 'sample' occupational categories. Evidence from the MainFrame evaluation suggests that although its modular structure would facilitate sampling, pressures from the world of work are discouraging trainees from shifting not only between TOCs, but within TOCs and between work placements during the two years on the course, particularly if they believe there is a possibility of being taken on permanently in their placement at the end of the scheme. Nevertheless, local Training Agency officers agree that one of the particular strengths of their MainFrame partners is providing opportunities for sampling. Interviews with careers officers in two of the three local authorities also confirmed this from their perspective.

The criteria for evaluating *relevance and coherence* are problematic. Often there is conflict between what off-the-job trainers consider relevant and what trainees and employers consider so. This probably comes back to the issue of training for a specific job versus broad-based training, including training for the world outside work. This is particularly pertinent in an area like Sheffield where the idea of training for a job is still an anachronism. An example of this within MainFrame has arisen in Bedfordshire where off-the-job training has been organised in terms of block release. Many of the trainees interviewed did not believe that their training during block release was entirely relevant, and college staff experienced problems in making the content of block release weeks of off-the-job training relevant. One response from those teaching to external qualifications was to stick to the syllabus and treat it as a period of intense study. An alternative response is that there has been much development work on the block periods to translate everything that is done into competence terms, whether general, generic or occupationally specific, so that at least trainees can go away with a record of achievement.

The notion of coherence is less easy to grapple with, and requires examination of the two training plan summaries to consider the breadth and logic of the trainees' programme. While it may be relatively straightforward to recognise a collection of modules as incoherent, to specify criteria of coherence is less easy. To take account of the trainees' expressed needs and interest in negotiating their own programmes may exacerbate the problem of producing coherent programmes. One way forward being progressed by the MainFrame project is the idea of 'model schemes', not dissimilar to the idea of nationally preferred schemes except for the broader basis of modules that cluster together in apparently coherent ways. Reviews of successful individual trainee programmes may give clues as to which modules might be grouped together as model schemes.

During the course of the evaluation, progress has been made on the development of model programmes. A model training programme in MainFrame consists of modules grouped into a coherent pattern which, together with associated core and personal effectiveness elements, will meet all four YTS outcomes in an occupational area, as shown in Figure 3. Model programme design begins with these YTS outcomes and works backwards through training processes and the training plans to the inputs.

The model programme is not intended to be prescriptive but act as a template in designing individual training plans. Each trainee requires a unique combination of modules to meet her or his own needs and aspirations, and each provider will have its own strengths and weaknesses in terms of what can be provided. By the end of the FEU evaluation, few model programmes had been produced, but the module bank review that was being undertaken within the project would aim to ensure that each TOC sector and subsector would eventually have its own model programme.

Off-the-job training and training workshops also have a role to play in providing an opportunity for trainees who have special needs to gain competence in a job and/or a range of skills. The construction of occupationally specific MainFrame modules often relate competences to actual work situations rather than simulated ones. The system is sufficiently flexible to ensure that trainees can achieve competences in occupationally specific areas but not to enable them to 'qualify' to do the job as they have not been achieved through 'real' work experience.

#### OUTCOME 2: COMPETENCE IN A RANGE OF TRANSFERABLE CORE SKILLS

The Training Agency defines core skills as 'skills that are common across different occupational areas and different areas'. The YTS approach is based on the idea that there are identifiable core competences common across all TOCs which can be learned in any one occupationally specific area and can transfer to another. The schemes should provide opportunities for progression in four core areas:

- number and its application;
- communication;
- problem-solving and planning;
- practical skills.

The Training Agency has produced a core skills checklist of some 103 core skills arranged in 14 skill groups that cut across the core areas. The idea is that during on- and off-the-job training, workplace supervisors, trainers and tutors should seek to identify core skills in the tasks trainees carry out. These need not be learned in a sequential order, and can be achieved at any time during the two years of training. Trainees begin from their baselines of performance and are given the opportunity to improve their performance in each core area. The MainFrame partners did not adopt the Training Agency checklist, but derived their own based on that used in CPVE.

During the evaluation, a good deal of dissatisfaction was expressed about this checklist. Most of those who did not use it said this was due to a shortage of time; completion of this document is time-consuming, given its size. Other problems reported was that it is difficult to understand, its purpose is unclear, it does not appear to be central to the design and assessment procedures, it was unable to record trainee progress, and it lacked relevance for trainees and supervisors. It was included in the general criticism that the MainFrame scheme

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<sup>1</sup> *Development of the Youth Training Scheme (The Reay Report)*, MSC, July 1985

generates too much paperwork, and of too much variety. There was some suggestion that it should be revised to take on the same format as the modules; others felt quite strongly that core skills should be taught through vocational and/or general/generic modules.

MainFrame has taken seriously these criticisms on what is an important issue if the second outcome is to be measured, and has set up a working party across the collaborating authorities to attempt to improve the core skills checklist. It is noted that the objections raised have been made more generally by tutors involved with CPVE and may reflect the structural difficulties of introducing basic skills profiling to FE staff used to other assessment procedures, rather than anything inherent in this instrument itself. Because the CPVE core was itself the subject of a national review, it was felt to be expedient to await the results of this before proceeding to radically alter that used by MainFrame partners and included in the Training Inventory.

#### OUTCOME 3: ABILITY TO TRANSFER SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO NEW SITUATIONS

The Training Agency states that transfer is 'central to the concept of a versatile and adaptable workforce. Young trainees must have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new tasks, new jobs and new locations'<sup>9</sup>. Of the four outcomes, the delivery, assessment and evaluation of transfer training is probably the most difficult to ensure.

It was observed that trainees were given less encouragement to move to new locations, jobs or even tasks within YTS than they once were, and this may cause difficulties in measuring the transfer of skills. The ease with which trainees can experience a wide variety of occupational roles will vary considerably according to such factors as the qualification route, their own aspirations, the size and nature of the work experience provider, and so on. However, the review procedures set up by MainFrame agencies should provide an opportunity to check the extent to which this outcome is being achieved. There is, as proposed by FEU<sup>10</sup>, at minimum, the opportunity for the trainee to engage in structured reflection after periods of work-based training, and to check with staff each others' understanding of the idea of skill ownership and the notion of transfer.

It can be seen, from even a cursory examination of randomly selected modules from the MainFrame bank, that a number of competence statements are not specific to the task but attempt to measure transferability of skills as well. Trainees may not always be aware that this is happening, but if the training plans are being implemented in an effective way, individual training programmes should contain a significant degree of skill transfer, even if they are not given opportunities to test that transferability in new tasks, new jobs or new situations. In this respect the system relied heavily on the Training Agency's TFS93 for recording examples and illustrations of instances of trainees demonstrating transfer.

<sup>9</sup> *Development of the Youth Training Scheme (The Reay Report)*, MSC, July 1985.  
<sup>10</sup> *Supporting Quality in YTS*, FEU, 1989.



In part, the issue of integration is relevant here for, if the on- and off-the-job aspects of training are more fully integrated, there is the opportunity for skill transfer to take place across the two, providing supervisors and tutors are aware of what trainees are doing in both parts of their training. There is some evidence that this does happen within MainFrame. Tutors, trainees and supervisors report that they are aware of this, though it does not appear to be structured but almost inevitable and natural.

The modules, however, may facilitate this in a more structured way. Most modules for role execution do contain statements which could be used in a variety of contexts. For example, in a computing module, one of the competence statements is 'use a wordprocessing package', and another is 'work in an orderly and consistent manner'. In addition, the module bank contains a number of modules with the programme purpose of transfer. Generally speaking, these are generic and general modules, the contents of which may be applied to a range of occupational roles, for example, Stock Control or Display. In designing programmes, staff are encouraged to include transfer modules in either the on- or off-the-job context to ensure a broad training base for trainees.

#### OUTCOME 4: PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The interpretation of 'personal effectiveness' has proved to be a problem since, as FEU has indicated, the Training Agency has provided a number of different and often inconsistent definitions<sup>10</sup>. Essentially, the phrase refers to the wide range of behaviour that demonstrates that trainees know how to react appropriately in situations to get the best results, and covers such things as:

- tackling own problems;
- showing responsibility;
- taking the initiative;
- making decisions;
- accepting decisions;
- co-operating with others;
- influencing others;
- receiving and learning from advice;
- assisting others to solve their problems;
- engaging in negotiation;
- managing resources;
- showing drive and determination;
- monitoring progress.

Such characteristics of personal effectiveness are considered important by employers and need to be built into the design and assessment of individual training programmes. Indeed, employers and workplace supervisors reported that, if anything, these characteristics are more important than occupational skills. Trainees will need to learn about the importance of creating harmonious relationships in the workplace, and the necessary social skills to become effective employees. They can gain insight, during on-the-job training, about the way work is organised, work relationships, and how people contribute to the

<sup>10</sup> *Supporting Quality in YFS*, FEU, 1989

tasks and purpose of a job. As skills develop and trainees become more confident, they should be encouraged to take responsibility for certain areas of work such as planning, organisation and control of their day-to-day activities. Moreover, these aspects of working life need to be assessed along with other more skills-based competences.

In order to establish a basis for the measurement of personal effectiveness, MainFrame has developed two main strategies:

- the inclusion of personal effectiveness competence statements within modules;
- the personal effectiveness inventory (PEI).

Evidence from the FEU evaluation research showed that staff attitudes vary across the collaborating LEAs. Some liaison officers reported a high degree of employer satisfaction with the PEI, to the extent that some would like to use it as a tool for appraisal with their own employees. Others, however, complained of its unwieldiness and apparent irrelevance to trainees and employers alike.

The wide range of responses to the PEI revealed in the FEU evaluation findings suggested that it is either very context-sensitive or that there may be areas of good practice which need examining and replicating across the collaborating partners. As a direct result, the MainFrame management committee set up a working party to look into the value and possible ways of improving the PEI. One of its first tasks was to consider a revised draft in light of comments that the competency statements have been conflated too closely. The working party returned to the original PEI, making deletions and amendments to take account of previous and new criticisms. For inspiration it turned to a thorough examination of a report published by the Psychological Service of the Training Agency<sup>14</sup>. Some key features of this report were incorporated into the revision of the PEI, which also attempted to retain its best elements. The revised version of the PEI was subjected to a validation process, obtaining the views of a range of users. Some minor modifications were made before it was presented to and accepted by the MainFrame Management Committee, and is now referred to as the 'Personal Effectiveness Record'.

#### EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME REVIEW

At present there is no single system of monitoring and evaluation in operation across the MainFrame partners. However, one of the partners — Haringey — has been undertaking an LQI project on the development of a trainee information system involving other partners in MainFrame (see Box 13). HESTA has committed itself, through its development plan, to the design and implementation of a comprehensive programme review consisting of complementary systems of monitoring, evaluation and moderation:

The Agency must develop consistent and thorough

*Personal Effectiveness in YTS: A Report on the Range of Related Concepts in Field Use*, MSC Psychological Service, Report No. 243/S

programme review mechanisms: these are imperative to the monitoring of quality of training, identifying weaknesses, recognising and disseminating good practice and generally consolidating performance. There has been some progress in facilitating Programme Review processes which are able to analyse past performance in ways which inform future action: however we acknowledge that in order to achieve what the Training Agency has termed effective programme review, systematic mechanisms designed to monitor, evaluate and moderate performance throughout the Agency must be set in place.<sup>12</sup>

### Box 13 TRAINEE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

This LQI project was undertaken by Haringey Education Service, but with the other MainFrame partners involved, together with two other YTS managing agents. This project sought to identify the information that managing agents might wish to collect and report back through programme reviews, management groups and annual reports. The project has spent some time on designing forms for information collection and reports. Its key concern was to identify measurable performance indicators of both effectiveness and equity. Four quantifiable measures of effectiveness were proposed:

- number of trainees enrolled on programmes against target enrolment;
- number of trainees completing their programmes against enrolment numbers;
- number of trainees gaining qualifications, passing examinations or achieving units of credit against the numbers enrolled;
- number of trainees progressing to further or higher education or employment upon completion of their YTS programme, against numbers completing.

The issue of equity was addressed by ensuring that information on gender, ethnicity, disability, funding status

and trainee/employee status is collected, collated and correlated with indicators of effectiveness.

The project identified the main benefits of a trainee information system:

- demonstration of concern for quality;
- dissemination of good practice, publicity and promotion of professional image;
- improved marketing information;
- the possibility of ensuring better integrated training programmes for trainees;
- monitoring progress on equal opportunities;
- identification of weaknesses in programmes and schemes;
- comparisons within agency, between years, and — with caution — national trends.

This project has built on the experience of working with the FEU evaluation of two-year YTS, but has implications beyond YTS and is bearing in mind the needs of those involved with the Employment Training programme. The final report, including recommendations and forms, was published in April 1989. A follow-up project covering implementation of the information system is being planned.

Here, monitoring refers to the systematic collection of data on trainees and programmes; this is to be computerised to the fullest extent possible, with designated staff keying in data to terminals on a networked system based on IBM-compatible microcomputers. Some of this information is collected already. However, the agency wishes to collect and store a wider range of information at the 'point of entry' of trainees and then through their programmes. The evaluation process is best described as the analysis of information collected. That this builds on the experience of working with the FEU evaluation is spelt out in the development plan:

An evaluative programme has been developed in co-operation with the FEU and the LEA managing agents associated with the MainFrame project. It is best described as the analysis of information collected through firstly, the

<sup>12</sup> *HESTA Development Plan*, 2.3.1, Haringey Education Service, August 1988

monitoring process, and secondly, a number of 'loosely structured' interviews with trainees, tutors (training workshops and colleges) and work-placement supervisors. The research undertaken as a result of the evaluation is most closely associated theoretically with action research — that is, based firmly in practice and acting as a spur to further development. It is not concerned directly with making organisational changes or practice within it; neither is it concerned to interpret information gathered. Information from the evaluation, in the form of reports, will be presented against performance indicators agreed by the Management Group.<sup>13</sup>

It is intended that the major source of information will be the monitoring system, but additional data will be collected through interviews with trainees, tutors, work experience supervisors, liaison officers and management. In order that evaluation is based firmly in practice and act as a spur to further development — that is, as action research, using performance indicators to provide the context of evaluation reports, such as:

- agency starts in terms of numbers on given programmes;
- trainee starts by gender and ethnicity on each programme, and in the agency as a whole;
- retention/programme completion rates in programmes analysed against variables such as qualifications on entry, gender, ethnicity, disability;
- post-course destinations (this is usually the immediate destination).

Evaluation reports will not interpret the information for this will be the responsibility of those concerned with moderating and assessing programmes against performance indicators agreed within the agency. All liaison officers in Haringey already moderate as an intrinsic part of their role. Information collected through the monitoring process will inform the moderation system, as will evaluative reports. The main source of information, however, will be obtained through reviewing trainees and programmes. It is intended that each individual/group involved should have access to information relevant to programme review which will itself advise their own inputs. In this model there are group reviews as well as programme review teams. The group reviews might be the most appropriate meetings to make a range of adjustments to programmes within the overall framework set. This would leave the programme review teams to examine major issues on the basis of the detailed evaluative reports and structured comments of training/liaison officers presented in a set format.

A model for administering the programme review system has been proposed. The agency has an existing schedule of monthly management meetings attended by managers and deputies of the three separate schemes running within it. In future, one meeting in every three will be designated a quarterly management meeting which will measure and report on the achievements of

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<sup>13</sup> *op cit*, para 2.3.4

the agency and the schemes running within it, in the context of objectives set out in the development plan. It will also receive and act upon reports from the TOC-based programme review teams, and from the agency's research unit. TOC-based programme review meetings are scheduled to take place twice a year when changes, informed by the review process, can be effectively and speedily used. The reports received will be used in the process of making decisions about the remainder of the trainees' programmes, if appropriate, and about future provision. Group reviews will be the main forum for trainees to comment on their perceptions of the various elements of the training process. Meetings will be informal, attended by all trainees, one or two tutors and a liaison officer, and located in the institution used for off-the-job training. The reviews will discuss the appropriateness of model programmes, trainees' views on the level of integration within programmes, the form and content of modules, inputs, training processes, and the outcomes of the programmes.

The purpose of effective programme review is to check the quality of each of a scheme's programmes and the scheme overall, as well as to provide scheme planners with information concerning the effectiveness of their recruitment and marketing procedures. The monitoring and evaluation system, as action research, has the function of feeding information back into the training agency so it is more effective in its programme organisation and support. As demographic changes result in fewer school leavers to enter YTS and increasing employment opportunities for young people, YTS managing agents are not likely to prosper as much as they did three or four years ago as the 'last resort' for young people. Through effective marketing, agencies have to persuade young people and employers that YTS should be the 'first resort'. Indeed, the Training Agency expect managing agents to increase substantially the number of employee-status trainees they accept on to their schemes, in proportion to those on trainee-status. To achieve this, marketing is a crucial factor, and to this end monitoring and evaluation have a significant role to play.

#### FEU COMMENTARY

##### INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

It has been noted that MainFrame has not developed any specific and common strategies for designing training plans for those identified as having special needs. Rather, it is hoped that the degree of flexibility that characterises its modular structure enables the needs of all trainees, regardless of ability, to be met. It has been a matter of initiatives and projects at a local level to try to fill gaps and cover deficiencies in the modular structure. It became apparent that the training needs of premium and PAFD trainees, especially those with special needs, require reconsideration. The opinion was expressed that there were insufficient and inappropriate modules available for trainees with special needs. This has already been recognised by MainFrame and significant developmental work has been going on to develop more basic and access modules. The concern was expressed that too much emphasis was placed on matching modules to preferred schemes and NVQs, whereas the main advantage of a modular

structure was to credit the achievements of trainees who would traditionally not be expected to gain any qualifications.

MainFrame has greater participation by women and ethnic minorities than the national average. But, in spite of this over-representation of women and ethnic minorities, the patterns of participation within the scheme, in terms of funding status and TOC distribution, demands attention from managing agents since they appear to continue to reinforce traditional occupational and social stereotypes.

In terms of the modular structure, there was no evidence to suggest that this was responsible for the still apparent inequalities. On the contrary, it did have the necessary flexibility to respond to individual needs and special training needs, whether due to gender, race or some kind of social, physical or learning disability. However, interviews with trainees did reveal that they perceived some degree of racism among agency staff, and this has been and will need to continue to be monitored sensitively and carefully.

#### PARTICIPATIVE LEARNING

FEU has noted that participative learning only takes place when trainees begin to appreciate their own part in the learning process, understand the aims of the programme and the purpose of YTS, identify with people supporting their progress, and take a positive role in negotiating what needs to be learnt. From the evidence in the evaluation, MainFrame trainees have not typically made this transition.

#### RESPONSES TO EVALUATION FINDINGS

We have also been concerned to identify the progress made by MainFrame towards meeting the Training Agency's four outcomes of two-year YTS. In terms of the evaluation, a number of questions were asked of the meeting of the four outcomes (see Appendix 1). The evaluation has shown that all four outcomes are met within the project. However, the TSAS report in Bedfordshire detected a lack of commitment to this system on the part of many participants, confirming the FEU evaluation findings. While it was beyond their brief to evaluate MainFrame provision as a whole, the report did recommend that the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group should review how the modular system is working and how participants are coping with it.

Being an action research project, these evaluation findings have been fed back into MainFrame at the earliest possible opportunity. In particular, five areas of concern about the differences between programme design (theory) and implementation or delivery (practice) have been identified and responded to:

- modules and the module bank;
- the personal effectiveness inventory;
- the core skills checklist;
- integration of on- and off-the-job training;
- staff development.

The first four have been discussed in this section (staff



development will be examined in the next). This summary will illustrate how MainFrame has responded to evaluation findings.

### **Modules and the module bank**

Apart from increasing the amount of assessment paperwork that college tutors had to deal with, the use of modules appeared to have little impact on the teaching and learning styles employed. There were some exceptions, however. The newer modules, for example, incorporate module competence objectives with core skills which, if used effectively, will ensure integrated structural links between different parts of the programme. Where block-release periods were used for off-the-job training, there was more evidence of non-traditional teaching and learning styles being employed, organised around the use of the modules, especially if those block periods were longer than one week. Unless a whole block of teaching time is devoted to modular teaching, this creates difficulties for tutors teaching on programmes that are not modular. Modular programmes set in a context of non-modular institutions are inevitably going to run into difficulties. This has been recognised by one of the partners in MainFrame, which has now engaged in an MDF project to embed the MainFrame modular system in the FE sector (see Box 3). Otherwise, colleges that provide YTS off-the-job training on an 'infill' basis will not have the opportunity to implement a truly modular delivery system.

From an organisational point of view, this flexible system has to be supported with flexible timetabling, scheduling of meetings, and the capacity to cope with smaller learning groups. Staff may require further training to ensure that modularisation is effective. All this has resource implications and, above all, requires support from the very top of any institution or organisation that takes on this approach if staff at the grassroots are to be motivated to work effectively within the system. It was found that most problems in implementing the MainFrame system were where high-level support was lacking.

By the time of the interim report, the MainFrame management group had already agreed in principle to sponsor a major revision of the module bank. The findings gave the impetus to the design of a detailed schedule of activities covering the period from November 1987 to September 1988. Some of the activities undertaken by local programme officers, sector group leaders and members under the guidance of the MainFrame Project Development Officer are to:

- identify sector group leaders and group members;
- agree main priorities review;
- receive documentation guidelines from the core/PEI working groups;
- initiate programme review with sector group leaders;
- agree checklists for programme and module design/content;
- review nationally preferred schemes and approved qualifications in each TOC;
- compare with current training programmes;

- agree main vocational qualifications in each TOC;
- design and agree model training programmes in each TOC;
- compare with current content of module bank;
- agree and recommend additions and deletions;
- review selected modules according to agreed criteria;
- produce new modules to cover the gaps;
- check modules for core skills and personal effectiveness;
- update module bank;
- update catalogue;
- distribute software.

To complete this work, it was necessary to finance the release of 60 people from colleges, schemes and the agencies for approximately half a day each over 32 working weeks, i.e. 16 days.

Three of these days were taken up with a residential conference, already discussed in the previous section on staff development. The objectives of this conference were:

- to establish the context and need for a review of modules and the module bank;
- to remind colleagues of the overall design framework and update them on recent innovations;
- to inform sector group leaders of the key features of the FEU interim report;
- to devise an agreed checklist of criteria for module writing;
- to bring sector group leaders up to date on the most recent developments at NCVQ;
- to introduce colleagues to the principles of model programme design;
- to give sector group leaders practice in model programme design;
- to inform sector group leaders of progress in techniques to design work-based modules;
- to introduce experientially the principles of DACUM;
- to advise sector group leaders on new procedures to integrate assessment of vocational competences, personal effectiveness and core skills;
- to give sector group leaders practice in the above;
- to agree a programme of action to review and revise the module bank locally and on an inter-LEA basis over the next few months.

This major event in the process of reviewing the module bank took place as planned, and was attended by nearly 90 staff. The FEU Project Evaluation Officer had the opportunity to give a thorough report on FEU interim findings, and the main interim findings were consolidated into the three-day programme. It was

possible to cover the whole of the planned programme, thereby achieving the following outcomes:

- review of the design framework;
- consideration of the major issues arising out of the FEU interim report;
- comparison of FEU findings with staff's own experiences of the bank;
- updating of NCVQ and its implications for MainFrame;
- use of DACUM to identify staff development needs;
- practice in module writing;
- evaluation of the proposals to integrate documentation of core skills and PEI with vocational assessment;
- a model for programme design and associated issues;
- practice in designing model programmes;
- a schedule from each sector group for designing programmes and reviewing the associated modules;
- integration of sector group leaders into useful working groups.

While there was no formal evaluation of this conference, most participants seemed satisfied that the event was useful in staff development and a reasonable starting point for the review of the module bank.

There has been much activity since this residential course, at the local level and inter-LEA meetings and workshops, based on TOC sector groups. Inevitably, progress has not been uniform across TOC groups which, in any case, were not all starting from the same place. Throughout the process FEU evaluation findings have been fed back from the employers and workplace supervisors' survey, trainees' survey, college and scheme staff survey and liaison officers' survey.

### **Personal effectiveness inventory**

The FEU findings expressed the disquiet some staff felt towards the use and content of the PEI as a means of assessing the fourth YTS outcome. Although these responses were not as detailed or specific as those which related to the module bank, it was felt to be important that the PEI should enjoy the confidence of all involved. The response was to set up a core/PEI working group to re-examine the notion of personal effectiveness, its assessment and recordings of progress. A number of meetings have been held by this group, involving up to 12 representatives in each LEA including those required to administer the PEI. As reported previously, the PEI has been entirely revised to incorporate the latest Training Agency commissioned research on personal effectiveness while retaining the best elements of the earlier inventory. Particular attention was paid to language and relevance. The new content and format was evaluated by the group with end users, including employers, liaison officers, and scheme and college staff. The results led to some minor modifications, but generally confirmed the new format and

content, which has since been referred to as the Personal Effectiveness Progress Record, as it is included in the Training Inventory (see Appendix 2). Early indicators in the FEU evaluation suggested a generally favourable reception for this revised sheet.

### **Core skills**

The same group has also had the task of looking at the Core Skills Checklist which emerged in the FEU evaluation as having a number of difficulties:

- problems of language for trainees and staff;
- amount of paperwork involved in completing and updating;
- size of the checklist;
- relevance for staff and trainees;
- procedures for use.

There has been much discussion within the core/PEI working group about the checklist. While everyone appears to agree that the CPVE bank of competence statements upon which it is based contains important shortcomings, the group felt it would be unwise to abandon it given its national validity, and in advance of its predicted improvements by the Joint Board. If, however, these improvements do not come about, further work could be done within MainFrame to 'translate' the checklist into language more accessible to trainees and staff, or to 'buy into' a database of basic skills being developed by C&G.

One undoubted difficulty has been the checklist's perceived lack of relevance for staff and trainees. Proposals have been accepted to focus core skills sharply on the vocational modules by listing relevant core statements on the back of each module, with the checklist included on the Training Inventory for a formative record of achievement and as the basis for summative assessment in a way which would incorporate all relevant aspects of training; for example, training plans, personal effectiveness, work experience or modules. In this way, it is hoped that core attainment and assessment can be centrally located within vocational experience.

A consistent criticism from those who work within the project was the amount and variety of paperwork involved in the scheme. As a result of this, some consideration has been given to moving towards a system where four outcomes can be measured within the modular structure or, if deemed necessary to have separate instruments for core skills and personal effectiveness, design them in a manner consistent with the format of existing modules. In this way, outcomes in terms of transferability and personal effectiveness may be given more equal weight in assessment and certification to the first outcome, competence in a job and/or occupational skills, which the majority of competence statements within most modules in the module bank are concerned to measure. While this proved difficult to realise, the outcome was the development of the training inventory which is able to bring together a range of information on individual trainees' programmes and progress, and encompasses records of three of the four outcomes (it does not yet include a record for the presentation of evidence of the transfer of skills or knowledge). In the short term, this has probably added to the

burden of paperwork as, during a transitional period, information is kept on more than one system. But liaison officers reported that they were confident that, in the longer term, such a composite record would reduce the amount of paperwork.

### **Integration of on- and off-the-job training**

From the FEU evaluation there seemed to be agreement among a significant proportion of the members of staff and trainees included in the sample surveys that integration needed attention. In particular:

- There should be a closer fit between modules used in college or other off-the-job contexts and in the workplace.
- There should be greater contact in general between off- and on-the-job providers.
- More tutors should have copies of, or access to, on-the-job modules (and more workplace supervisors should have knowledge of trainees' off-the-job training or qualification routes)
- There were felt to be few, and in some cases decreasing, opportunities for tutors to visit the workplace.
- Some tutors felt there had been a lack of consultation in selecting modules to be used, and they felt distant from the review process.

In response to this, the MainFrame management group commissioned a paper on this issue for discussion at one of their meetings. Many ideas and suggestions were put forward, and some of these have been acted upon, especially those of a staff development nature.

#### **EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The delivery of a quality YTS requires not merely a comprehensive and integrated model for programme planning and design, but procedures for ensuring that the model is actually being implemented, and that it is as effective as it can be. MainFrame is committed to the provision of a quality scheme, and is therefore encouraging the development of effective programme review measures to ensure quality assurance. FEU's interim evaluation found wide variation in the practice and effectiveness of the programme review procedures across the three authorities. To this there has been a response requiring each authority to critically examine its review procedures and undertake to establish one that is effective. There has been some discussion recently about the need for moderation and the role of a moderator. In at least one of the partners — Haringey — a moderator has been appointed whose tasks include the monitoring of trainee files, which are seen as central to the proper management of training programmes. The process is also convenient for quickly establishing a picture of what is actually happening. Files are examined and a proforma completed, providing the basis of a descriptive report in which recommendations and comments are also made. This monitoring takes place quarterly and visits are made to all areas of the training organisation's work (an ITeC, a training workshop, and an employer-based programme). For each visit, 20 files are

selected — 15 considered representative are chosen by the scheme and a supplementary five are selected as a control by the moderator. Individual reports are made to the scheme and a composite report fed back to the management group.

The system has proved effective in providing a good picture, with a minimum of effort, of the state of trainees' programmes. It also provides for acceptance by each scheme because its method is simple and open. Linked to management structures, it has allowed attention to be focused on well-described strengths and weaknesses. Its limitation is that it does not talk to providers or trainees in the construction of reports. It has already had an impact on the relationship between the scheme and off-the-job training providers. In the past there has been a multiplicity of styles and qualities in relationships between schemes and the providers for whom they purchase off-the-job training. As MainFrame requirements have become more prominent, it has become necessary to standardise these relationships to make them more susceptible to monitoring and moderation. The moderator anticipates that this process will be expanded and developed to include in-house off-the-job training and workshop training. Thus, the duties in relation to moderation have been identified as:

- devise, establish and maintain appropriate schemes for moderation;
- set appropriate aims, objectives and schedules for moderation;
- organise and co-ordinate moderation;
- be responsible for the moderation of training activities against:
  - MainFrame systems and procedures,
  - YTS design framework,
  - qualification route requirements,
  - nationally and locally devised standards of competence;
- produce and present reports on moderation as necessary and as required, making appropriate recommendations for the integrity of procedures and standards.



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## LEA CENTRAL ORGANISATION OF YTS

LEAs have a key role to play in the management of education and training opportunities for young people. Although MainFrame's aim is to develop common documentation and procedures for modular credit accumulation, each has its own management system and operates under different constraints. Previous FEU evaluation has noted the 'enormous variation' in the way YTS has been planned, organised and delivered within and between LEAs<sup>1</sup>. One feature of the collaboration is that although the LEAs involved have started with different structures and histories, a common structure is evolving, to a limited extent, within which to deliver two-year YTS. Nevertheless, the different histories of the three LEAs have a legacy in the kind of changes that have taken place in their organisational structures, which may provide insights into the management of vocational education and training after the implications of ERA have worked their way through the LEAs.

The original model of organisation was established by Bedfordshire. The background to Bedfordshire's role in the provision of YTS has already been outlined in FEU publications<sup>2</sup>. The early scheme demonstrated the LEA's preparedness to move quickly and, on a large scale, respond to the demands of YTS, and was regarded as forming part of Bedfordshire's FE service, but was freed from the normal constraints on the work of colleges and LEAs. Enhancing the LEA's contribution to YTS, it offered a testbed for innovatory and good practice in pre-vocational and vocational education and training. As an LEA-based central agency, it was able to introduce some economies of scale necessary to establish self-financing provision, as well as a broadly-based training programme that covered the whole range of abilities and vocational interests, offering a balance between on- and off-the-job training. Moreover, it was able to establish a central records system, including employer placements, which reduced duplication and the ineffective use of resources. The LEA has developed a consortia approach which allowed smaller employers to have a role in YTS that they might otherwise not have had. One result of the early scheme was to encourage an active co-ordinating approach by the LEA to youth training from then on.

The key features of this organisation are the central agency function in which Bedfordshire Youth Training Group is linked to the Education Department but independent, as far as possible, of college influence, structurally and in terms of location. Initial resources financed the original structure which saw the appointment of a central agency management team and a team of liaison officers. The agency was established on two sites, one in Bedford for the north of the county and one in Luton for the south with a central administrative system. After initial resourcing, the agency had to become self-financing and, at a

<sup>1</sup> *Evaluation of the FE Role in YTS*, FEU, July 1985

<sup>2</sup> Appendix VIII to *Supporting YTS*, FEU, May 1984 and Appendix VII to *Supporting YTS*, 3rd edn, FEU, May 1985; *Converting Learning into Working*, Longman for FEU, November 1985

time of a declining 16-19 cohort, there is a need for it to become more competitive and attract funding from new sources. The agency has recently responded to ET to accommodate adult training within its structure. The LEA has been successful in tendering for the sole training agent in the county; it also contracts with the Training Agency as a training manager.

A decision was made to develop its work on curriculum development in collaboration with two other LEAs, Haringey and Sheffield. The modular approach had arisen in Bedfordshire because:

- it was essential and pressure was needed in that direction;
- conditions surrounding the Bedfordshire YTS facilitated its development.

The enabling conditions in Bedfordshire were:

- links with a range of post-16 curriculum development;
- a centrally managed YTS programme of a consortium type, large, and covering the range of ability and vocational interests;
- a certain distance from both college perceptions and staffing and from employers' perceptions and methods;
- the ability to staff and organise on a 'clean sheet' basis;
- a supportive Training Agency at all levels.

Two presentations were arranged, one each for Sheffield and Haringey LEAs, at which the system was explained and the implications of involvement considered. As a result, each LEA committed itself to the development programme. Sheffield and Haringey were pursued because each had the intention and capacity to create the enabling conditions. They also had the contextual features which complemented those in Bedfordshire.

The London Borough of Haringey has a history of working with young unemployed people, and schemes in which unemployed school leavers could obtain jobs. Special projects and funds enabled the council departments to take on additional recruitment of 'hard-to-employ' youngsters as part of a borough apprenticeship and training programme supported by some pre-employment special education programmes. When the MSC devised the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), the borough responded by taking up and expanding the initiative. Later, when YTS was introduced, the borough council successfully bid to become a managing agent. The LEA recognised that this would provide them with the opportunity to seize the initiative in designing, developing and administering programmes of vocational preparation. This was an opportunity for the education service to establish a well-balanced and coherent programme, and foster the notion of a partnership with the MSC.

To co-ordinate this response, Haringey council was required to make structural and organisational changes utilising the training workshops, Haringey ITeC which was set up in late 1982, and the new college of FE, Haringey College. A substantial number

of Mode A (employer-based) and Mode B (training workshops, college-based) schemes were set up for over 300 places. The emphasis in the first year of YTS was to build an effective structure, which was hindered by changes made at the national level by the MSC, especially for Mode B schemes. By the second year, the emphasis had shifted to quality control.

When YTS was extended to two years in April 1986 Haringey saw this as a positive step, but one that needed linking to genuine progression in terms of training and employment opportunity, in spite of the perceived inadequacy of the MSC's financial support. The extension was not seen in isolation, however, and the increasing involvement of the MSC in NAFE, RVQ, and the adult training strategy needed to be taken into account in the borough's long-term strategy for FE and training. Haringey Education Service had been working closely with the council's Economic Development Unit; two-year YTS necessitated a closer working relationship, especially with Haringey ITeC. Subsequently, the personal services programme was to be transferred from the Economic Development Unit to the education service.

Since two-year YTS brought about the requirement for managing agents to gain ATO status by April 1988, Haringey Education Service applied. In meeting the requirements of the MSC/Training Agency which monitored their programmes, the service needed to establish a stronger degree of programme identity while maintaining a degree of autonomy for individual schemes. As a result, the agency was formalised as the Haringey Education Service Training Agency (HESTA) in the autumn of 1986.

Because of the pressures, both self-imposed and external, for the provision of a quality scheme, Haringey had already begun looking at other local authorities' YTS provision. In 1985 they had the opportunity, along with Sheffield LEA, to examine the innovatory work being done in Bedfordshire in establishing a modular unit credit transfer system for YTS trainees, an extensive staff development programme, and developmental work on workplace assessment. In December 1985, along with Sheffield, Haringey agreed to join Bedfordshire in its innovatory work as a collaborative development programme. Since July 1987, the borough has taken a leading role in the project by agreeing to accommodate the MainFrame office and offer support in establishing the post of the project officer, and subsequently a staff development officer, to work with MainFrame and the borough.

Since joining the collaborative project, the management and organisational structures have had to be modified to facilitate the design and delivery of the modular programme. As in Bedfordshire, liaison officer posts have been created to administer guidance and review.

Sheffield's introduction to the collaborative project, although not recognised as such at the time, was an in-service training event held in October 1985 called 'Two-Year YTS'. It was open to staff from Sheffield's five colleges of FE and those involved in the three YTS schemes (two community projects and a training workshop) run by the city council's education department.

The event was addressed by staff from Bedfordshire LEA. Their message was simple but not welcome. Two-year YTS was to be sharply focused on work-based skills and the workplace had to be used as the prime training resource. It was contended that, for this to happen, a group of staff needed to be identified whose sole job was to find and nurture the workplace, coach workplace supervisors, negotiate appropriate training programmes, and support the trainee there. Staff in colleges and schemes were, understandably, cool to the idea of colleagues from other organisations playing such an important role in dealing with YTS trainees. At this stage, the five colleges and three schemes were largely autonomous in the delivery of their YTS programmes, dealing directly with the local MSC office and local employers.<sup>3</sup>

However, a series of in-service events held between January and March 1986, together with other meetings to consider management issues, set the scene for Sheffield's commitment to the collaborative project. This was given formal LEA approval in April 1986. A major change immediately ensued. An embryonic central unit was established, comprising administrative staff supporting a temporary team of liaison officers culled from the colleges and schemes. The whole of the Education Department's YTS administration was now centralised and took the name Hallmark as a declaration of intent to be a quality scheme. For many months Hallmark Centre staff were temporary and a changing team. Permanent appointments were not possible owing to protracted negotiations with staff unions. In January 1987, Hallmark began to recruit its permanent team of staff. The team at the central unit was to comprise 20 liaison officers, an administrative assistant and three clerks, a staff and curriculum development officer, a workplace development officer and an agency co-ordinator. This process was completed by the appointment of the agency manager in May 1987.

The major change in the organisational structure during the past year has been brought about through the re-organisation of the post-16 sector along tertiary lines. This has seen the closure of existing colleges of FE, and the opening of six new tertiary colleges. This has affected the organisational structure and delivery of YTS.

During the period of evaluation, Sheffield Hallmark has been attempting to consolidate itself as the central agency in a partnership with the colleges and schemes, at a time when the LEA was undergoing tertiary re-organisation which has had direct and indirect effects on the central unit. One of the ex-Mode B schemes has been merged into one of the new FE colleges, and stronger links have been formed between the two remaining training workshops and colleges. The managers are allowed more discretion and responsibility now, but colleges are taking over some of the administrative functions. According to the agency co-ordinator, there is strong evidence that tertiary reorganisation is affecting the ways in which colleges are able to

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<sup>3</sup> Sheffield City Council was one of five LEAs surveyed as providers of YTS between May 1983 and November 1984 before provision was centralised under one agency; see B Challis, C Mason and D Parkes, *YTS and the Local Authority*, Research and Development Series, no. 37, MSC, August 1986.

resource and participate in the development of Hallmark and its YTS programmes.

This is happening at a time:

- of falling numbers of young people in the 16-19 age range and therefore the likelihood of reduced numbers coming into Sheffield Hallmark;
- when Hallmark centre will have to find a new base within the next year;
- of recent significant turnover in staff of the central unit at Hallmark.

If, in addition, account is taken of the evaluation findings that focused on the need for integration between on- and off-the-job training and identified the need to improve the management, support and supervision of liaison officers, along with Training Agency requirements for monitoring and self-evaluation to be built into the agency structure, it would appear that the time has arrived for the managing agency to review its present structure.

In reviewing the present structure, the agency manager made the following observations:

- The role of liaison officer will require further development to meet the demands of NVQs in respect of training of workplace supervisors.
- The supervision of 20 liaison officers by one agency co-ordinator will fail to give the team of liaison officers the degree of support and supervision they require; further development of their role will make this more acute.
- If liaison officers are to be effective in securing firm arrangements for the integration of on- and off-the-job training, it is essential that they are able to work closely with off-the-job providers.
- With falling numbers of trainees, the agency will not be able to increase its number of liaison officers and resources for curriculum development, training workplace supervisors, supervision and support, monitoring and evaluation, etc. have to be found from within the current establishment.

The proposal is that there should be a formal review of Hallmark's central unit, which will need to agree clear objectives and make recommendations of changes as appropriate. Almost certainly, this will entail a reconsideration of the advantages and disadvantages of having a central YTS organisation, versus relocating the support team and administration resources in one or more of the new colleges.

#### THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CENTRALISATION

In outlining the organisational development of the three collaborating LEAs that were to become the MainFrame project, we have seen that although there are a number of differences reflecting local traditions and decisions, the common features have been the co-ordination of YTS provision by a central unit and the creation of a tier of liaison officers with supporting agency management. In two of the three LEAs, this involved



taking away from local FE colleges the responsibility for managing YTS schemes. They were, instead, contracted to provide off-the-job training by the LEA central agency. In Sheffield, however, this was never attempted, and Hallmark as a central administrative unit remained supportive of and the co-ordinator for college-based YTS design and delivery. The organisational strategy of centralisation has advantages and disadvantages, which any LEA considering centralising of provision outside the college structure has to take on board.

A number of advantages have been identified:

- LEAs are free from the normal constraints on colleges or employers.
- They are able to offer a testbed for innovatory work in pre-vocational and vocational education and training.
- Their YTS managing agents are able to respond quickly and on a large scale to the demands of YTS.
- They are able to introduce economies of scale that are necessary if agencies are to establish self-financing provision.
- Programmes offered can cover a wider range of abilities and occupational areas.
- Operating as umbrella YTS organisations, individual initiatives within the scheme can be encouraged.
- They are able to offer a balance between on- and off-the-job training within the scheme.
- A central administrative and record-keeping system can be established.
- Work placements can be organised centrally, reducing duplication and ineffective use of resources.
- The role of liaison officers can be used to integrate on- and off-the-job training more effectively than the use of college tutors.
- They can more easily develop a consortia approach which permits the participation of smaller employers in YTS in ways that might otherwise not have been possible.

The disadvantages of centralisation have been most evident in the case of Bedfordshire and Sheffield. As providers of off-the-job training, the colleges have a crucial role to play in the general effectiveness of the agency's YTS provision, particularly in the extent to which they can provide integrated programmes.

Resistance within the colleges could undermine the system which requires individual commitment to be successful, if such support is not forthcoming. The key is to ensure that all staff involved are highly motivated, well resourced and given appropriate staff-development opportunities to be effective. Motivation can also be enhanced by encouraging active participation in the curriculum project by being involved, for example, in the sector groups. However, in some instances where individual tutors have initially been interested in such participation, college management has been unwilling to support these activities. During most of 1987, NATFHE action also made college tutors' participation in

MainFrame problematic. The FEU evaluation also identified communication as a problem. In many instances college tutors felt that, rather than being partners in a project, they were at the receiving end of instructions from above, many of which they felt were unrealistic in the context of actual classroom teaching.

Apart from motivational and participation problems, the centralisation of YTS provision has not necessarily ensured the most effective use of resources. College tutors have established, over many years, links with local employers. The centralisation of the agency and the creation of a tier of liaison officers to work directly with local employers means that those with the most experience and expertise have not been called upon. This is not only ineffective use of resources, but heightens the sense of resentment as well. In terms of working towards an integrated programme, the widening of the space between colleges and local employers would appear to have a negative influence, particularly in the short term. However, perhaps in the longer term, the role of the liaison officer would be equally, if not more, successful in bringing about integrated on- and off-the-job training.

At the same time, however, a number of difficulties and issues have arisen surrounding the centralisation of YTS provision by LEAs. Two broad areas of concern are:

- YTS managing agencies being part of larger bureaucracies and bureaucratic themselves;
- the relationship with colleges.

Typically, although economies of scale enable larger organisations to respond more effectively to initiatives and undertake innovatory projects more easily than smaller agencies, there is an additional cost in terms of the degree of bureaucracy entailed. LEA managing agencies are themselves bureaucratic, with hierarchical structures and lines of accountability. This means that they suffer from all the conventional disadvantages of bureaucratic arrangements to do with 'red tape', structured communication channels, and the need for meetings to make decisions. Liaison officers in the research reported frustrations due to their powerlessness to make decisions about on- or off-the-job training, having to report back to the organisation and await a decision 'from above'. This can make central agencies slow to respond to initiatives and the need to change. The procedure is further slowed down if the organisation is part of a larger bureaucracy (the local authority itself) and accountable to various committees and subcommittees, and is in communication with other bureaucracies such as the Training Agency.

The second issue is the relationship with colleges. In all three LEAs, local colleges had responded to varying degrees to early MSC schemes, and a number of them had been acting as managing agencies. Not in all cases have the advantages of centralisation been fully appreciated, and there has been a great deal of friction over this issue. Colleges have been mainly given the role of off-the-job training provider, and contracted for this work. Because the central agency acts as intermediary between on- and off-the-job training, the direct relationship between colleges and local employers has all but disappeared. This has

caused some resentment and friction, especially where college tutors had previously taken a leading role in establishing relationships with local employers as providers of work experience and work placements. However, there has not been the same kind of relationship between the agency and colleges in the three LEAs.

#### BEDFORDSHIRE

The four colleges in Bedfordshire have strong formal and informal links with the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group, primarily through the college co-ordinators. Nevertheless, this relationship is by no means special, and the colleges respond to the LEA managing agency in much the same way as they would to any other YTS managing agency. Indeed, the FEU evaluation findings suggest that in some instances the colleges were less responsive to the needs of the LEA managing agency rather than more. The problem of 'infilling' Youth Training Group trainees into existing courses with other YTS trainees and sometimes non-YTS students appeared to be greater than in either of the other two LEAs. There was evidence of resentment in parts of some colleges that their YTS functions had been reduced to providing off-the-job training by the creation of the central agency, especially where tutors thought that employers who had provided work experience for many years had been taken over by the agency. On the whole, the financial relationship was less evident than in Haringey, and relations between the agency and colleges appeared to be quite harmonious. Colleges seemed to have a good deal of autonomy, and were not strictly accountable.

#### HARINGEY

HESTA and the two colleges had very much a contractor-subcontractor relationship. The colleges were subcontracted to provide off-the-job training for the central agency, and the financial aspects of this relationship were quite strongly laid down. The colleges appeared to be more accountable than in any of the other two LEAs to the agency, and the managing agency was much more prepared to make requirements of the college.

#### SHEFFIELD

On the surface, the relationship between colleges and the agency was democratic. Each college, before and after tertiary reorganisation, was considered an equal partner in Hallmark and formally represented on the agency's management committee. In practice, the colleges acted independent of the agency. They retained, for example, the responsibility for selecting trainees onto YTS, and therefore the concomitant activities of publicity and marketing. Administration of the schemes passed on to the central agency, which also took responsibility for co-ordinating work placements. The agency seemed to have little power over college management and was generally unable to bring about standardisation of practice. The major difference identified in the FEU evaluation was the exercise of power by senior LEA officers over the colleges, which in turn possibly reflects the individual commitment of those in such positions towards a central YTS agency. Where there had been resistance to the centralisation of YTS away from the colleges, the agency had generally failed to persuade college tutors and management of the advantages of

centralisation. It is perhaps symptomatic that, of the three LEAs, there has been discussion of decentralising YTS provision only in Sheffield.

#### THE ROLE OF THE LIAISON OFFICER

In at least two of the three LEA agencies, the role of liaison officer has been crucial to the delivery of YTS. Bedfordshire was the first of the authorities to appoint a group of liaison officers. The other two LEAs subsequently followed their course of action, though the role was perceived somewhat differently in Sheffield. Between them, the three LEAs have appointed 50 liaison officers, of which nearly two-thirds are female. The role of the liaison officer was analysed using DACUM procedures:

##### Overall purpose

- assisting in devising arrangements for employer-college-agency relations, and taking a prime role in liaison for planned work experience.

##### Main duties

- maintaining and fostering good relations between employers, colleges and agencies;
- organising and supporting the recruitment of trainees;
- devising and implementing support and guidance provision for trainees;
- monitoring and assisting the development of properly integrated training programmes;
- training and coaching supervisors in the workplace;
- holding group training sessions with trainees on a regular basis;
- maintaining and developing assessment and certification procedures;
- acting as advisers to meetings of appropriate programme review groups;
- co-operating with other liaison officers to share and extend efficient and effective practices;
- undertaking any other duties of a similar level and responsibility as may be required, from time to time.

It should be noted that, in Sheffield, the role of liaison officers differs somewhat from this. They are not, for example, responsible for organising recruitment, which remains one of the tasks of the college tutor; nor do they have group training sessions with trainees on a regular basis.

The majority of liaison officers feel that finding new work placements is still an important part of their job. Most had responsibility for a wide range of occupational areas. Over half said that their responsibilities to TOC areas had changed since their appointment. In some cases this had involved a fairly significant shift in the area of responsibility; in others it was a broadening out from a single area to a few related areas or a wider range of mainly unrelated occupations. There was no noticeable trend toward increasing specialisation.

Two-thirds of the liaison staff supported the idea of specialisation. The same proportion supported the idea of having specialists to deal with trainees with special needs, though concern was expressed that these trainees should not be 'ghettoised' but integrated into mainstream programmes as far as possible. It was also observed that special needs trainees increased the workload on liaison officers. Any one with a significant proportion of trainees with special needs should ensure they also have some without the same problems; they should also be responsible for a reduced number of trainees in recognition of this additional workload.

In each of the three areas, the LEA managing agency had a crucial role in providing for special needs trainees. Although the agencies were not the sole providers of special needs training in any of the areas, it was clear that the Training Agency local offices valued the contribution MainFrame partners could make to the provision of special needs training within their umbrella organisations. This has implications for the role of liaison officer. A little under one-third of the liaison officers reported receiving training for dealing with the range of special needs they were confronted with, and some of these had been trained before they joined the agency. Nevertheless, over 90% said that they were confident in dealing with special needs trainees.

Another important aspect of the role of liaison officer staff has been identified with respect to monitoring and evaluation. It was noted that self-evaluation procedures would need to be overseen by at least one person — and that person could be a liaison officer. In Bedfordshire and Sheffield, senior liaison officer staff had been given responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation. In Haringey, although the responsibilities for evaluation were given to a research officer, and the tasks of moderation were being fulfilled by the agency's moderator, it was envisaged that ultimately the tasks of monitoring, evaluation and moderation would be undertaken by the agency's liaison officer staff.

In the findings of the evaluation, this role is crucial to the successful implementation of the MainFrame project. The whole process of monitoring the delivery and carrying out review and assessment is very dependent on the liaison officer. The TSAS report on the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group recognised the vital role they play in the integration of different elements of the MainFrame scheme.

#### **NEW PARTNERS AND THE TRANSFERABILITY OF THE MODEL**

The collaboration of the three original partners in MainFrame provides us with some insights into the advantages and problems of collaboration as well as the organisation structures and enabling conditions necessary to support it. One of the objectives of the FEU evaluation was to monitor the transferability of the collaborative model to other LEAs. During the evaluation the collaborative project was joined by one further LEA — Liverpool — during 1987, and one large college of FE — the Wirral Metropolitan College (see Boxes 1 and 2). Although these two partners have not been a major focus within the FEU evaluation, the impact of their joining the MainFrame project has been monitored.

As interest in joining MainFrame widens, the project is responding by looking towards regional and sub-regional levels in their organisational structure. This will enable neighbouring partners to engage in local MainFrame initiatives such as staff development, and the development of a local accreditation system involving local employers. It has also responded by reviewing the enabling conditions for membership. In its three-year development plan, the following criteria have been specified:

- proven commitment to quality training;
- full commitment to the future development of MainFrame;
- adequate resources/records/work placements;
- access to facilities made available to MainFrame officers;
- conformity to agreed MainFrame systems;
- subject to moderation;
- observance of the MainFrame copyright;
- representation at meetings;
- commitment to quality in work experience placements and observance of MainFrame procedures.

The transferability of MainFrame is being tested in other ways. For example, it has been testing its flexibility by responding to the training needs of industry and commerce. Mainly through a combination of DACUM and functional analysis procedures, MainFrame has been engaged in developing customised training packages for a range of industries and businesses (see Boxes 5 and 6). Moreover, the attempt is being made to embed the modular credit system in WRFE, bridging the vocational/academic divide (see Box 4).

#### FEU COMMENTARY

In this section, the organisational requirements for the effective design and delivery of a MainFrame-based YTS have been discussed. This has focused on:

- the need for a central organising and administrative unit;
- the role of the liaison officer.

This section also addressed the issue of the transferability of the MainFrame model to other LEAs. It has been observed that Haringey, Sheffield and, more recently, Liverpool LEAs have adopted or adapted the Bedfordshire model with varying degrees of success. The case of the Wirral Metropolitan College has illustrated how the model may be transferred to YTS managing agents other than LEAs.

The evidence of the evaluation suggests that the model is transferable providing the enabling conditions are met. As these have been reviewed in the light of experience of new partners, it is worth reiterating that, from the FEU perspective, an additional characteristic should be the ability to respond to initiatives in a flexible way. As indicated earlier, any flexible curriculum framework requires flexible institutional arrangements if it is to be put into operation effectively and not remain at the level of rhetoric. Not all existing partners have such institutional flexibility. A crucial feature of this is strong support and commitment to the initiative throughout, from LEA officers through to part-time training staff and workplace supervisors.



It is clear that MainFrame has implications beyond YTS, and the first of the enabling conditions — links with a range of post-16 developments — is becoming increasingly significant. New partners coming into the MainFrame project will need to be aware that they are not merely buying into a ready-made YTS delivery and assessment system. MainFrame is becoming a vehicle for curriculum development in the whole range of WRNAFE and other initiatives in post-16 education and training. An example of one LEA's post-16 curriculum policy is summarised in Box 14. This is in part the product of disseminating the lessons learned through the provision of MainFrame modular YTS. The new partners will need to be willing to engage in and contribute to those broader curriculum developments.

#### **Box 14** **HARINGEY'S POST-16 CURRICULUM** **FRAMEWORK**

As part of its response to the Education Reform Act, Haringey LEA has drafted a post-16 policy statement for consultation. The following is a summary of the section on curriculum framework, much of which was influenced by the LEA's experience of collaboration in MainFrame.

The LEA intends to set up a curriculum framework which will enable:

- greater continuity between pre- and post-16 provision;
- enhanced access and equality of opportunity;
- clearer progression routes within and between areas of post-16 provision and the LEA's higher education provision;
- a set of agreed common outcomes, design criteria and processes;
- a starting point for a rational resource model;
- a base to respond to national initiatives;
- a standard interface through which the LEA can liaise with others.

##### *Overarching curriculum principles*

The framework is informed by the following three principles:

- entitlement which places an obligation on institutions to make learning opportunities available to clients, which lead to certain generic aims;
- client-centredness, which places the needs of the client at the centre of design, delivery and evaluation of the curriculum;

- consultation, which enables staff to use professional expertise in selecting and negotiating aspects of provision appropriate to client need from the range of entitlement available.

The framework should make the following outcomes possible:

- the acquisition of skills;
- the development of knowledge and understanding;
- the fostering of personal effectiveness;
- the capacity to apply skills, knowledge, understanding and personal effectiveness to life roles (including work);
- the transparent and detailed recording of achievement.

##### *Design criteria*

In designing programmes, staff will be required to keep the following guidelines in mind. Programmes should combine the following features:

- breadth;
- balance;
- relevance;
- differentiation;
- flexibility;
- continuity;
- coherence.

In organisational terms, the role of the liaison officer is crucial to the delivery of quality YTS. Liaison officers do not feel that their status reflects their responsibilities. In terms of liaison with colleges, in particular, their role is hindered by their lack of status, with a feeling of little influence over off-the-job training staff. This lack of influence is also felt within their own organisational structures, and the fact that their organisation is part of a larger bureaucratic machine. In part, the solution to this problem must be to accord more prestige to the role of the liaison officer. Only in one of the three LEAs might they be considered to be being paid 'the rate for the job', with a salary, job conditions and career structure paralleling that of college lecturers. To be compared with employment officers within the Career Service does not adequately reflect the range of responsibilities that liaison staff have to carry out, which requires the development of a range of skills from guidance and counselling to curriculum development.

As the TSAS report of the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group noted, while the commitment of staff is not in doubt, there is concern about the level of staff turnover among liaison officers. This appeared to be attributable to a variety of factors, such as their relatively modest salary in respect to the skills needed and responsibilities involved, and increased opportunities outside the scheme. The rate of turnover of staff does not reflect particularly well in the on-the-job training. Employers and workplace supervisors appear to value the ability of liaison officers to be effective and professional in their task, rather than specialising in the occupational areas they are dealing with. They value the construction of a long-term relationship but, to date, the turnover in liaison officer staff has hindered this, and the problem has been compounded by continuous internal reorganisation within agencies. Such problems may be seen as inevitable as new organisations find their feet and establish their functions and strategies for meeting objectives. However, priority must now be given to the establishment of external relationships if the agency is to maintain the confidence of local employers. There must also be some consistency in the role of liaison officers across the three LEAs, in spite of the different contexts in which they operate. Through collaboration, the role has become more complex and the job conditions of the early pioneering days must change to reflect that increased complexity.

The advantages and disadvantages of centralisation and collaboration have been considered. It has been shown that the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages only if adequate support and resourcing is forthcoming. The MainFrame system, being complex and sophisticated, requires whole-hearted commitment. To ensure this, resources need to be put carefully into staff development within the LEA and across the MainFrame partners. There is need for strong support and commitment from the higher echelons of LEA administration and college management if the development of a central unit and team of liaison officers is to be properly resourced. Without such support, it may be difficult to motivate staff at the grassroots, and the relations between staff in off-the-job training providers and the managing agency may be strained, particularly if there is no clear role definition. It is crucial to ensure that the commitment of the

management infects the staff who deliver the scheme. This, above all, requires a good communication system and as much negotiation and involvement of training staff as possible, in all aspects of the agency's work.

#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the FEU evaluation of MainFrame, a consistent focus has been on the need for staff development and training. As the Youth Task report said:

An essential part of the delivery in the new scheme will be in-service training, refresher training of supervisors, line managers and instructors, FE staff, and other education and youth service tutors. It is essential that the MSC should contract with other providers to develop and fund a network, preferably based on existing organisations and institutions, of accredited centres for these purposes.<sup>4</sup>

ATCs within Training Agency areas have been set up to support managing agents and providers of YTS by offering a staff training and consultancy service. These have been charged by the Training Agency with the provision of:

- an inter-agency approach to staff training and development;
- a range of advisory services;
- a programme of modules of staff training to match the elements of the YTS programme;
- dissemination of training and related information;
- peripatetic coaching to local programmes;

and are required to serve the YTS training and development needs of:

- industry and commerce, including managing agents and sponsors' staff;
- FE staff;
- LEA staff, including careers and youth services;
- staff from voluntary organisations, training boards, and independent training and counselling bodies;
- Training Agency staff involved in the provision of YTS.

In addition to provision of staff training, ATCs also have responsibility, in conjunction with the Training Agency, for appraising existing inter-agency provision, identifying and filling any gaps, and avoiding duplication of provision at local and regional level.

FEU has extensively supported the notion of staff development, and has previously seen it as a strategy for ensuring quality in the delivery of YTS and the meeting of NCVQ requirements<sup>5</sup>. In one publication relating to teaching staff development for

<sup>4</sup> *Youth Task Group Report*, MSC, 1982

<sup>5</sup> *Assessment, Quality and Competence: Staff Training Issues for NCVQ*, Longman for FEU, 1986; *National Vocational Qualifications: Initial Criteria and Guidelines for Staff Development*, FEU/NCVQ, October 1988

vocational preparation<sup>6</sup>, it is suggested that a self-assessment process by staff may be required to identify the abilities of individuals and programme teams. A suggested checklist of abilities is presented:

- *A student-centred approach*

The negotiation with and counselling and guidance of learners about their learning programmes, supported by formative and summative assessment.

- *Curriculum innovation*

The ability to introduce and implement new curricula.

- *Method innovation*

The use of participative teaching/learning methods including simulations, role-play, group work of various kinds, and residential periods and the design, construction and use of profiles and other records of achievement.

- *Team co-ordination*

Management of the activities of a number of teachers' contributions to a vocational preparation/training programme.

- *Team membership*

The ability to contribute successfully to the operation of a team of vocational preparation/training teachers in designing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum.

- *Liaison and negotiation*

The development of co-operative working arrangements with other groups of teachers and agencies outside the college.

- *Basic skills teaching*

An understanding of the concept of basic (core) skills and the ability to work against a checklist of identifiable skills (rather than a syllabus) which emphasises the process of learning and the content.

Managing agents need to be clear about the roles that individual adults are expected to perform with respect to the training of young people. The successful fulfilment of a given role requires a certain competence. Managing agents need to identify these competences. Such training will also need managing. FEU has also given advice on planning and management of staff development<sup>7</sup>. This guide offers support to those, particularly in LEAs, responsible for the provision of staff development and in-service training for those involved in post-14 education, taking account of new funding arrangements outlined in DES Circular 6/86: *Local Education Authority Training Grants*. Many opportunities arose for LEAs to collaborate with other institutions, LEAs, local and national agencies in the development, delivery and evaluation of their staff development programmes. Indeed, Circular 6/86 made collaboration a

<sup>6</sup> *Teaching Skills: Towards a Strategy of Staff Development and Support for Vocational Preparation*, Longman for FEU, June 1982

<sup>7</sup> *Planning Staff Development: A Guide for Managers*, FEU, 1987

requirement in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. For collaboration to be effective, attention has to be paid to:

- the identification of common concerns susceptible to exploration on a collaborative basis;
- liaison arrangements;
- recognition within collaborative arrangements of individual LEA needs and circumstances;
- standardisation of administrative mechanisms;
- opportunities for collaboration inherent in all elements of the staff development process.

The FEU publication gives advice on how to build on collaboration to make it effective in the design and delivery, as well as evaluation, of staff development. A key management role in this process is the identification and analysis of need.

#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND MAINFRAME

While there was a good deal of staff development activity among the MainFrame partners, there was a consistent need for more — particularly for college and scheme staff and workplace supervisors. While this was not a serious shortcoming, given the relatively high level of commitment to and provision of staff development within MainFrame, the data collected from virtually all the programme elements, and in particular the tutors, suggests a widely varying and sometimes inconsistent interpretation of the content and delivery of staff development. It was not so much a question of quantity of opportunities, but their management, and the capacity of some staff to respond to them.

The MainFrame management committee responded to these findings. During the second year of the evaluation, the awareness of MainFrame has been significantly enhanced and further staff development undertaken. This has been achieved in several ways:

- newsletter;
- module bank review;
- dissemination conference;
- use of GRIST funding and ATCs;
- agency staff development;
- new partners;
- projects;
- development plan;
- staff development working group.

#### Newsletter

In response to the lack of awareness of the nature of the collaborative project at the grassroots, the MainFrame Project Development Officer was given the additional responsibility of producing a newsletter at periodic intervals. *MainFrame News* was distributed among all staff in the collaborating authorities to inform them of the nature of the project and encourage them to feel part of it. In part, the distribution of FEU project bulletins has assisted too, though it would appear that these have not reached more than a small proportion of staff involved in the project. While the idea of a newsletter has advantages, it is time-

consuming to produce and may not be read by the staff who deliver YTS.

### **Module bank review**

Although its primary task was to ensure that the content of the module bank was more comprehensive, relevant, coherent and efficient, the process of review set up in part as a response to FEU evaluation findings has been very much a vehicle of staff development. The strategy has been based on the bringing together of sector group leaders from each of the partners. There was a three-day residential course held early in the second year of the evaluation, attended by some 70 participants from across the partners, including Liverpool and the Wirral. Over the ensuing months, there has been continued activity based on the sector groups, both locally and across the collaborating LEAs. This has assisted in raising the awareness of staff from colleges, schemes and agencies of the nature of the MainFrame modular system, and other issues such as the requirements of NCVQ and nationally preferred schemes. This programme has been supported with funding to facilitate the release of staff, particularly from colleges.

However, the evaluation found that the effectiveness of this review has been patchy. Not all TOC sector groups are equally effective; some staff were unable to secure release, in spite of available resources to provide cover; the 'cascading' principle appears to be rather ineffective as a means of staff development. Consequently, the second-year evaluation, especially through the college and scheme staff tutors' survey, discovered that some staff still felt that opportunities for staff development were unequal and some — generally sector leaders — had more than others. Part-time staff were particularly disadvantaged in this respect.

### **Dissemination conference**

During the second year of the evaluation, FEU supported a dissemination conference held for MainFrame. The intention behind the conference was to raise the profile of MainFrame within collaborating LEAs and to potential new partners. The invitations to attend were issued to LEA and agency staff in mainly senior positions, such as college principals and LEA and Training Agency officers. The conference was attended by 100 participants but, when evaluated, was considered to have largely failed to achieve its aims. This was mainly due to the appropriate managerial staff and officers invited having, in some instances, passed their invitations down the line; the audience was therefore not necessarily the one for whom the conference was intended. Nevertheless, as well as attracting some interest from potential new partners, the conference did succeed in updating and clarifying aspects of MainFrame for many staff who had been operating within it for some time and unable to keep up with developments. Several college YTS co-ordinators, in particular, expressed their satisfaction with the conference.

### **GRIST and ATCs**

As outlined above, a major source of support for LEA YTS staff development activities has come from the Training Agency and



the DES. From the Training Agency, it has been delivered through its support to local ATCs. Each of the partners works closely with ATCs in their area, though of the three original MainFrame partners only Sheffield Hallmark worked with its own LEA-run ATC. The range of staff training provided or supported by ATCs has been extensive in each of the partners.

Following *Circular 6/86*, an LEA Training Grants Scheme was made available to support INSET. This source of funding — GRIST — has facilitated a wide range of staff development in the FE sector, though not all of it specific to YTS. Indeed, a major problem for the LEAs has been to ensure that a fair share of the funding is used to support YTS provision. All the collaborating LEAs have managed to secure some amount of funding for staff development from the GRIST funds, though it has been variable and decreasing. But GRIST funding has been used to support some of the activities undertaken in the review of the module bank. It has also enabled inter-LEA visits to be made as part of YTS staff induction programmes.

### **Agency staff development**

All three LEA managing agents have had regular staff development sessions scheduled over the two-year evaluation period. These activities have been largely, though not exclusively, for liaison officers, and have encompassed a wide range of aspects of YTS and its delivery. In the evaluation findings it was observed, however, that there was some criticism of this provision, mainly on the grounds that it did not always reflect individual training needs. There was some concern about the nature of staff support provided by the agencies. It was not so much the quantity, but more to do with the management of staff development. In particular, sessions were often provided for all liaison staff, regardless of their previous experience or competence, and liaison officers reported feeling frustrated that while they were engaged in designing and delivering quality individual training programmes for their YTS trainees, they were not receiving such support themselves. Again, this was variable.

### **New partners**

An interesting corollary of new partners such as Liverpool LEA and the Wirral Metropolitan College coming into the project has been the mutual staff development initiated. For example, Liverpool and Wirral have used GRIST funding to enable scheme and college staff in their authority to visit other authorities and invite staff from other authorities to lead staff development activities. This has been to mutual benefit for the old partners have gained as much as the new ones in this exchange. An example of this is when Liverpool approached Haringey for support on evaluation and monitoring. A short residential course was organised by Haringey; one of the outcomes was that Haringey was able to clarify its information needs and strategies. This provided the impetus for an LQI project undertaken by Haringey (see Box 13). In this way, new partners joining MainFrame has been a significant source of staff development activity.

## Projects

LQI and other projects undertaken by MainFrame partners, whether in collaboration with each other or other YTS managing agencies, have been another significant source of staff development (see Boxes 3,4,6 and 7). The important point here is how the collaboration, in drawing up proposals, undertaking projects and disseminating results, have been influential in terms of staff development as well as providing a source of funds to enable related staff development to take place. The C&G six-sector project (see Box 7) has been a case in point. As a result of this, many staff in the collaborating partners are experienced with using DACUM and Delphi techniques as well as module writing, the construction of performance indicators, the identification of core and transferable skills, and the essential knowledge required to be competent in a task. This has had major staff-development implications, not only for staff in the six sectors but in most occupational areas.

## Development plan

The importance MainFrame attaches to staff development activities is reflected by the focus given to this area in discussions on the project's development plan. Staff development has been identified as a priority for action. One of the specified objectives in the development plan is:

to establish and review staff development programmes which underpin the marketing, needs analysis, design, implementation and review of competence-based training programmes.

It was noted at a recent residential meeting of those drawing up the three-year development plan that the staff development section should focus on the issue of 'learning management'. It has also been observed that once regional and sub-regional structures are in place, MainFrame partners would be able to develop more tightly structured staff development.

In addition, each of the partners is in the process of drawing up their own development plans and have been advised to pay attention to the identification of future staff development activities. One of the partners — Haringey — has identified in its development plan the following staff development activities to be managed:

- produce detailed guidelines for all processes associated with staff development;
- establish INSET group;
- produce induction programme for new staff;
- produce staff handbook;
- formulate general INSET guidelines;
- develop reporting-back procedures for all staff who have done INSET;
- train all staff/personnel to be involved in interview selection;
- increase awareness of staff towards industrial practice;

- work towards equality of opportunity for all existing and prospective staff.

### **Staff development working group**

To address the concern for staff development arising out of the FEU evaluation, the MainFrame management group agreed to the setting up of a staff development working group to design a standard competence-based staff induction package which would provide certification through one of the major validating bodies, and to review and update the existing staff handbook. The group will also seek to utilise the range of funding, including ATC, GRIST and Regional Curriculum Base funding, to support in-house training leading to C&G or RSA certification.

The first step for the group was to define the tasks it needed to aim to accomplish. In summary these are:

- to define staff development needs for:
  - liaison officers,
  - college lecturers,
  - workshop supervisors,
  - training officers,
  - college co-ordinators,
  - administrative/clerical assistants,
  - local programme development officers,
  - agency managers,
  - evaluators/moderators;
- to identify the limits of MainFrame requirements and those of the respective agencies;
- to develop appropriate staff induction packages for the above groups;
- to develop relevant materials and advise on resources;
- to recommend suitable assessment and accreditation procedures;
- to devise operational guidelines for MainFrame staff;
- the results of the 1988 FEU surveys of college and scheme staff, workplace supervisors, and liaison officers;
- DACUM sessions with:
  - liaison officers,
  - college lecturers,
  - moderators/evaluators,
  - workplace supervisors,
  - workshop supervisors.

The work was to be shared out among the collaborating partners, and would also be verified across the collaborating LEAs using Delphi techniques.

At the same time, a review of current staff training was undertaken, and proposals for a competence-based modular programme, which was also in line with Training Agency recommendations, would be developed. The modules would be designed along the lines of those developed within the C&G six-sector project, and would therefore include performance criteria, elements of knowledge, and skills. It was agreed that initial

accreditation would be through a MainFrame certificate of competence, although dual certification with either C&G or RSA was being pursued.

Staff development has been recognised as being of paramount importance. One of the partners — Haringey — has agreed to the half-time secondment of a member of its liaison officer staff at Senior Lecturer grade, initially for one year, to assist in the development and implementation of effective staff training programmes for MainFrame. The postholder is expected to:

- identify staff development needs for those working in HESTA and MainFrame by:
  - liaising with staff in MainFrame partners to agree roles for which training programmes are required,
  - co-ordinating sessions for staff within the project to analyse job role content,
  - collating and synthesizing the results of sessions in different partners' institutions,
  - checking the outcomes of this work for validity and relevance,
  - undertaking other consultation exercises to identify staff development needs;
- devise competence-based programmes for staff training by:
  - co-ordinating staff devising performance criteria consistent with agreed standards of practice within the MainFrame partners,
  - ensuring these correspond with nationally emerging standards,
  - co-ordinating staff identifying skills and elements of knowledge relevant to identified competences,
  - ensuring units of competence are organised in foundation and optional blocks to meet the needs of as wide a range of staff across the project as practical,
  - advising staff on the most appropriate assessment methods,
  - liaising with responsible staff in each partner and relevant MainFrame bodies to advise on appropriate training materials,
  - liaising with validating bodies to identify appropriate qualification routes;
- contribute to the evaluation and review of staff training in HESTA and MainFrame by:
  - liaising with staff responsible for evaluation in the project to assess the effectiveness of staff development programmes,
  - liaising with evaluation staff to identify any further staff training needs.

In addition, the postholder has two other general duties:

- producing reports on staff development for the MainFrame management group and other groups concerned with staff development within the project;
- ensuring that the content and organisation of staff training programmes are consistent with the equal opportunities aims of the project.

The FEU evaluation had identified a major commitment toward staff development among the MainFrame partners. However, the research found that the management of this staff development required further development if such commitment was to be utilised effectively. Although the second round of surveys indicated some progress had been made since the first year of the evaluation, some of the problems identified in the interim report continued to exist and were in need of attention.

These findings had been fed back to the MainFrame partners and immediate action taken on the initiative of Haringey. The establishment of a postholder to co-ordinate staff development activities within its own agency and across the project should pay dividends. At the time of writing this final report, it was too early to evaluate whether this action was having any effect, but what is clear is that MainFrame, in seeking to provide quality YTS, had undertaken a major initiative to improve staff development and make its delivery more effective.

It is anticipated, however, that resourcing such a programme of staff development may be problematic. Earlier in the second year of the evaluation, Sheffield had indicated that although it had previously benefited from GRIST funding, it was anticipating that this would be reduced in the coming year, which would seriously impede its staff development activities. Furthermore, Sheffield City Council's political decision not to directly undertake ET might well have an effect on its ATC provision. At one stage, it was feared that the ATC would be taken away from Sheffield LEA for failing to respond to this initiative, but now the likely outcome is that it will remain responsible for YTS training, although with diminishing resources this could further restrict the staff training activities it can support for its YTS managing agent.

In Bedfordshire, it has been reported that managing agency staff had made a major contribution to the LEA's staff development programme under GRIST. In particular, they were available to provide materials, inputs and support on issues relating to:

- developments in YTS and ET;
- equal opportunities;
- NCVQ;
- assessment of prior learning;
- modularisation.

But the irony is that agency staff fall outside GRIST regulations and their training needs have therefore to be facilitated in the main through in-house induction and staff training programmes, or events organised by MainFrame. Its commitment to ET, however, as the sole training agent for the county and a training manager, should ensure the continued development of staff training through its local ATC. As with the FEU evaluation, the TSAS report on the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group was satisfied that staff training and development opportunities within the scheme were generally good and found evidence of genuine commitment. The ATC had been used extensively and other in-house training recorded. Bedfordshire's system of staff appraisal had been noted with approval, for this should facilitate the identification of staff training needs. However, there was

some concern about the provision of these opportunities at management and supervisory level. The TSAS noted that staff development tended to be concentrated at the level of the liaison officer. There was little to suggest that the training needs of the agency manager and two deputies had been seriously considered, and they recommended that this should be remedied as soon as possible, especially if the staff appraisal scheme was to be managed effectively.

The advent of NCVQ has also provided opportunities and responsibilities for staff development. The emphasis on competence as the outcome of vocational education and training needs to be constructively carried through in staff training/development schemes. The model of accredited, competence-based, modular training, as outlined by the MainFrame staff development working group, is entirely appropriate as an endorsement of the process and outcomes of vocational training, and at the same time reinforces the initiatives already under way in the FE system. It is important that staff development is experiential. It should also be fundable as a priority in the LEA Training Grants Scheme. However, proposals based on the 'cascade' approach should be carefully examined. The FEU evaluation of the MainFrame project has demonstrated the potential inconsistencies that can arise through this approach, and it is neither the only nor necessarily best means of delivering staff training. The major requirement is for expert organisers of in-service training to provide a framework within which others can share their experience. Within the MainFrame collaboration, there is sufficient expertise to be able to organise effective in-service training quite distinct from those called in to service a particular in-service training requirement. MainFrame has been moving in the right direction to ensure that its staff training and development is effective in both design and delivery.



## 6. SUMMARY

This section attempts to summarise the main aspects of the report and indicate some features of MainFrame which may have an application beyond YTS in the future.

### NEEDS ANALYSIS

The context within which YTS providers have operated over the last four years has provided a number of valuable opportunities for curriculum development within youth training and vocational education and training in general. Requirements for two-year YTS place an emphasis on:

- individual competence-based training programmes;
- certificates which describe total achievement rather than just the passing or failing of end tests;
- the notion of a core of transferable core skills;
- the need for young people to be able to transfer their competences to new situations or occupations;
- personal effectiveness.

Within this overall curriculum framework, YTS has provided the opportunity for training to be provided through an individual training plan realised through induction and initial assessment, participative learning, continuous assessment, guidance, and trainee-centred reviewing within programmes, which require a balance and integration of on- and off-the-job training. Many of these features represent the best practice in pre-vocational and vocational education, and it is appropriate that LEAs and colleges should have included YTS within their post-16 provision as a model within which high-quality training could be developed.

While each of the LEAs collaborating in MainFrame has its own special features, each recognised that a large-scale collaboration based on such a starting point would lend coherence and structure to its youth training activities, provide the basis for a framework which might embrace all its post-16 vocational curriculum offer, and supply a test-bed within which fresh initiatives and approaches could be developed which, as processes, might have significant impact on the way in which their curriculum, institutions and staff would respond to future needs locally and nationally.

In considering the current and future context confronting FE, this approach would appear to have some justification. The establishment of the NCVQ framework nationally with its requirement for competence-based qualifications for which credits may be accumulated over a period of time, the appearance of NROVA as a means of collecting and accumulating evidence of achievement, the growing emphasis on individual action planning in education and training, the emerging notion of broad-based curriculum entitlement for those in the 16-19 cohort and perhaps beyond, governmental commitment to the creation of a network of TECs, each contains elements consistent with the themes underpinning the original NTI and therefore YTS. It is likely that LEAs and colleges which have responded positively to the YTS framework and even taken proactive initiative will be

better placed to develop appropriate provision in the 1990s. In particular, YTS, as taken up by the MainFrame partners, has enabled training providers to work more closely with employers and develop a prototype framework within which training can be delivered more flexibly and coherently.

Whereas demographic trends indicate a sharp and continuing decline in the number of young people in the 16-19 cohort and therefore a diminishing role for YTS as a national programme, the Training Agency maintains a commitment to the scheme as a vehicle for responding to special training needs and a means of delivering high-quality training to young people with employee status. As far as MainFrame is concerned, efforts have been made to develop programmes for youngsters with special training needs and incorporate employee status as a significant feature of its partners provision.

As a corollary to the decline in importance of YTS, the last year has seen the launch of ET as a major national programme, as a response to adult unemployment and emerging skills shortages, and thus the retraining of employed and unemployed workers. In addition to this, the 1990s are likely to see an increasing emphasis on the training needs of women and ethnic minorities. ET presents particular political difficulties for some of the MainFrame collaborators; nevertheless it has been taken up by three of the current partners who are using the modular framework they developed in YTS to design and deliver programmes.

Finally, the creation of a single European market in 1992 is likely to have important implications for the training and qualification structure nationally, which training providers will have to be aware of and ready to respond to. MainFrame, through its involvement in YTS and relationship with FEU during the course of this evaluation study, has commenced a project with similar centres in France and Belgium under the aegis of the European Commission's PETRA initiative.

#### PROGRAMME DESIGN

In responding to the above context, the MainFrame partners have developed a framework which derives from the design framework for two-year YTS and includes three major curriculum components to meet the four outcomes of YTS:

- a bank of modules;
- a core skills checklist;
- a personal effectiveness progress record.

Modules may be of three types — specific vocational, general and generic — and are designed at four levels which broadly correspond to the original WRNAFE levels. MainFrame modules were originally designed mainly with formative assessment and unit accreditation in mind, although all modules contain considerable information regarding activities which trainees would have to carry out to gain a credit; more recent units contain information about skills and knowledge a learner would have to acquire to be competent in a particular module. Whereas, at the beginning of the project, modules were mainly produced through disaggregating existing vocational syllabuses,

considerable effort has recently been devoted to writing modules based on workplace activity and competence and to adapting into MainFrame format units and elements of competence coming out of the Industry Lead Bodies.

The core skills checklist, which is very similar to the original CPVE bank of core competence statements, covers 10 areas of skill. The checklist is used to derive a template indicating core achievement at the beginning of a programme and is used as an instrument for formative profiling as a programme develops. Summative achievement in core is recorded on the final YTS certificate. Recent work within the project has focused on integrating this checklist more fully with the module bank by indicating relevant core skills on the reverse side of each module sheet.

The evaluation revealed certain problems with the core skills checklist which are still to be resolved by the project. The move to closer integration of core only partially addresses these. In addition, staff complained that the checklist is too large and all-embracing, completion was time-consuming, the language is difficult for trainees and staff, and the content is often perceived as irrelevant. MainFrame is currently exploring three possibilities:

- adopting the new CPVE approach to core which is much more compact and transparent;
- adopting the RSA practical skills profile;
- scrapping the notion of a checklist altogether and opting for more general and generic modules to cover core areas.

Whichever of these proposals is finally adopted, one criterion for selection will be the reduction of paperwork for staff.

Personal effectiveness has been dealt with in a broadly similar way to core through the *personal effectiveness progress record*, a profile MainFrame has developed itself with reference to research commissioned by the Training Agency. The evaluation reveals that this is more successful in application than the core skills checklist, with strong support expressed for its relevance, comprehensiveness and language.

Within MainFrame, trainees will be entered for assessments which meet the requirements of national validating bodies. Their achievements in modularised credits, core skills and personal effectiveness are also recorded and appear on the final YTS certificate. The recording of such achievement in a descriptive and transparent way should allow for progression to employment, or into FE at least, in institutions which participate in the project or accept the currency of its certificates for other reasons. Since the MainFrame partners intend to extend the curriculum framework to students and trainees outside YTS for whom no YTS certificate will be available, MainFrame intends to develop its own record of achievement which will list the statements trainees have shown competence in during their programmes.

A particular methodology has been developed for the design of training programmes which takes, as its starting point, the occupational competences required in the chosen vocational

area(s); once these are identified and appropriate modules selected from the bank, analysis is undertaken to specify other modules which have the programme purposes of initial assessment, foundation of education, transfer, theory underlying practice, integration, and skills development. Thus programmes are not an arbitrary collection of units reflecting a 'pick 'n mix' philosophy but intended to form a coherent whole with strong links between each component. Taken together, these modules constitute a model programme which should cover on- and off-the-job training and take the trainee to the point of occupational competence. MainFrame accepts that individual trainees bring their own unique combination of skills and experiences to any training context, and therefore the model programme should constitute only the basis for an individual's training programme. Following a period of initial assessment, modules should be added or subtracted from the programme according to individual need, which will include progression possibilities. Any individual programme should be checked to ensure that it contains a sufficient degree of breadth and balance and is likely to enable the trainee to achieve the four YTS outcomes.

The FEU evaluation suggests that there were some initial difficulties with the MainFrame modules. Comments made by staff suggest that the content of some modules was too prescriptive, the language opaque to trainees and staff, the module size uneven, and insufficient modules available for trainees with special needs. The project has taken note of such observations and devoted a significant amount of staff training time to reviewing and improving the module bank.

In general, FEU approves of MainFrame's adherence to an overall design philosophy which leads to definite outcomes, but takes account of individual need which may go wider than simply enhanced employment opportunities. Its attempts to facilitate credit accumulation and transfer, if concretised in firm regional or national structures, may significantly facilitate the progression possibilities and access opportunities for learners passing through its institutions.

In terms of the future, the project will face certain difficulties which will have to be resolved if MainFrame is to continue to develop. In certain important respects MainFrame has been running in parallel with initiatives engendered by the Training Agency and NCVQ. Over the next two years, a large number of units and elements of competence will be emanating from the Industry Lead Bodies set up as part of the Training Agency's *Standards Development Programme*. These units will reflect employment standards nationally and provide the basis for qualifications to be accredited by NCVQ. In addition, they should provide the basis for a national credit accumulation system. MainFrame's current strategy is to adapt such units to its own format which it believes enhances formative assessment and has commonality across all occupational areas offering advantages for multi-provider institutions and staff involved in constructing programmes for clients with a range of interests. However, the evaluation noted that many college staff object to having to complete two sets of documentation (one for NVQ and the other for MainFrame); where priorities have to be made it is almost

inevitable that staff will decide that NVQ requirements come first.

In a similar way, in areas comprehensively covered by Industry Lead Bodies, the work of specifying and assessing occupational competence will be taken on by the existing examining and validating bodies. In its development plan for the next three years, MainFrame has responded to these problems by resolving to concentrate its attention on developing flexible delivery (rather than assessment and accreditation) systems and continuing to derive and refine work-based modules only in areas requested by individual employers to meet their own training needs, independent of the national system, or in areas where no Industry Lead Body exists. Such an adjustment in direction does not undermine or invalidate the programme design philosophy, but leaves the first stage to be determined by organisations at a national level. The experience the project has had in identifying work-based modules has not been wasted but has led to research contracts with Industry Lead Bodies and employers wanting customised training packages.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

In practice, the contents of individual programmes, the sites and duration of training, and qualifications are recorded on a document called the *training inventory*. The success of these programmes was measured by the evaluation in terms of trainee participation, equal opportunities, and to what extent they met individual trainee need.

The study revealed a high level of experiential learning within the project, although this was less the case in colleges than in the workplace. However, the degree of trainee involvement in programme design and development was judged to be low despite efforts by staff to encourage such participation. There was little evidence that programmes were being negotiated in a participative way.

The evidence relating to equal opportunities reveals a more favourable picture. It was clear that each of the partners had gone to some lengths to ensure that young people were being adequately catered for in terms of gender, ethnic origin, and disability. This is evidenced by a number of initiatives such as systematic monitoring procedures, including equal opportunities statements in the contracts signed by work-experience providers, encouraging ethnic and gender balance in occupational training areas, and undertaking specific projects on opportunities for young women and those with disabilities.

The most systematically researched area which provides evidence about meeting individual needs was the way individual programmes were implemented for trainees with special training needs. Considerable effort has been devoted by the project to this question; nevertheless, certain problems remain:

- There are often difficulties in securing adequate work experience placements for such young people.
- There is a perceived shortage of modules appropriate for their use.

- The programme design methodology, which takes occupational competence as its starting point, needs to be adjusted to take account of more modest outcomes.

Despite these shortcomings, the modular approach does allow a number of trainees to build up a unique programme, at least as far as on-the-job training is concerned, and achieve some credits where previously little would have been available.

As far as the use of modules for the full range of trainees in the project is concerned, the evaluation revealed an uneven picture. In general, modules were used less in the off-the-job context than at work. In particular, where trainees were following a national qualification syllabus, module sheets tended to be completed by staff retrospectively and not using the sheets to assess continuously. By contrast, modules were used with enthusiasm by many employers who had no competing assessment procedures and welcomed the fact that modules provided workplace training with structure and coherence, particularly when developed by the project using rule-holders as the primary source of information.

Standards of assessment, on- and off-the-job and across the MainFrame partners, showed some variation. Various initiatives are being taken by the partners to overcome these variations; these include the appointment of local or regional moderators, the more systematic attachment of assessment criteria to modules, and support and training for workplace supervisors.

In considering the overall effectiveness of MainFrame as a vehicle for YTS, the evaluation suggests that programmes designed and delivered within its curriculum framework successfully met the four outcomes of the scheme.

Integration of all the elements of a programme of learning into a coherent whole has long been perceived by FEU as a desirable feature of education and training. Whereas the programme design methodology outlined above should facilitate progression through its co-ordinated use of programme purposes, MainFrame has experienced some problems in this area, ones which probably derive from the YTS design framework with its separation of delivery into on- and off-the-job training rather than from its own procedures. The greatest perceived gap in the first year of evaluation was between the college and workplace environments. As a result of an FEU interim report, the project made a number of changes to its procedures to facilitate integration; these included encouraging workplace supervisors to become more involved in planning their programmes and giving them more information on off-the-job training, integration of record-keeping documentation into one document (the training inventory), ensuring college staff attendance at college reviews, and encouraging college staff to visit work places more frequently. On the whole, these initiatives have had a positive effect in strengthening the integration of programmes.

In general, consideration of the programme design framework and its implementation in practice suggests a disparity. Whereas the framework provides for a wide degree of flexibility and student-centredness which is successfully reflected in the work experience arrangements, implementation in the colleges suggests



that these opportunities are not being fully taken up by staff or institutions. The MainFrame partners have taken this problem seriously, not just because of its implications for the project but also because of the wider implications for the future delivery of vocational education and training in the context of the 1990s. Haringey, in particular, is addressing the problem through a pilot credit accumulation project, one of the central objectives of which is increasing the flexibility of its colleges as providers of VET; this will mean a sharper emphasis on meeting individual need through flexible start dates, the individualisation of learning programmes, flexible timetabling, self-supported study, the provision of individual learning support and materials, and a systematic approach to the accreditation of prior achievement. Of particular significance is the fact that the project is not limited to YTS but covering eight qualification routes for full- and part-time study, regardless of programme or mode of study.

Lack of truly individualised programmes may also help to explain the low level of trainee participation in programme design. Unless real choices can be offered to trainees in terms of their own programme structure and content (and this depends greatly on the flexibility of the providing institutions), it is unlikely that trainees will feel motivated to take part in the decision-making process. Since the summer of 1988, MainFrame staff have been developing techniques in appraisal, assessment and accreditation of prior learning and individual action planning, especially in the light of ET, but with the intention of applying such approaches across all programmes in the project. It is expected that such a strategy will greatly enhance individualised learning for MainFrame students and trainees. In addition, MainFrame, through its involvement in the European Commission's PETRA project, will be looking at the experience of individualised learning delivered through 'alternance' in training centres in France and Belgium.

#### PROGRAMME REVIEW

Programme review occurs at two levels within MainFrame: the individual trainee's programme and the overall provision.

Individual trainee reviews occur at intervals of between two and three months depending on the trainee's status (STN trainees have more frequent reviews) and the individual partner's own arrangements. Individual reviews take place at work, while group reviews (which provide a measure of peer support) occur in the off-the-job training institution. The process is intended to be trainee-centred so individual needs can be identified and programmes adjusted accordingly. This process of review focuses on recording and feeding back to the trainee the results of formative assessment against the four outcomes of YTS. In most cases the evaluation noted a high degree of negotiation between trainee and supervisor or tutor in the information which was eventually transferred to the trainee's central record. Where particular weaknesses are identified or workplaces or providers fail to make certain opportunities available, note is taken and action recommended.

Closely allied to individual review is the process of guidance and support. Within MainFrame, this occurs principally through an

ongoing process of induction which covers every stage in the development of a trainee's programme: pre-entry, on-entry, during the scheme, and progression from the scheme.

The processes of review and guidance/support are facilitated by a network of liaison officers who have wide responsibility for the design and management of the individual's programme across workplace and college; it is hard to see how the project could have been effective without their contribution. Indeed, the role of such staff, which could be summarised by the term 'learning manager', may prove valuable in the future of VET in general and is one which MainFrame wishes to explore and develop.

Overall programme review has been a continuing feature of MainFrame's activities. Originally stimulated in part by the data collection needs of the FEU evaluation and in part by the Training Agency's requirements, the MainFrame partners have continued to develop systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures to aid them in the process of assessing the effectiveness of their programmes, recruitment and marketing.

In addition, the evaluation itself, as a piece of action research, had valuable influence on the development of the project. This was particularly the case following the FEU interim report at the end of the first year when a number of observations concerning the nature and effectiveness of the modules, core checklist and personal effectiveness progress record were reported and promptly acted upon by the project. This experience has prompted MainFrame to establish a permanent working group to moderate standards across the partners, monitor and evaluate against shared performance indicators, and continue to assess the effectiveness of its procedures. In terms of its broader application, this approach will almost certainly be piloted and then taken up by the LEAs in a modified form as a quality assurance approach to its WRFE provision.

#### MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

As well as being a curriculum framework, MainFrame is a collaboration between LEAs which requires an organisational structure. Collaboration was perceived to have a number of advantages:

- the opportunity for LEAs to engage in an operationally united programme;
- immediate access to modules covering a full range of vocational sectors;
- opportunity to contribute to a modular scheme;
- adaptation of structures and systems working effectively elsewhere to own context and benefiting from the experience of others;
- partners able to pool resources when responding to developments in YTS and vocational education and training;
- shared staff-development initiatives;
- linking of a number of LEAs potentially creates the opportunity to act as pressure group at national level to

influence the Training Agency, NCVQ and the examining and validating bodies.

During the course of the evaluation, some disadvantages emerged:

- collaboration across a wide geographical area has penalties in terms of finance and time;
- adherence is required to what may be perceived as a rigid structure unable to respond rapidly to local issues;
- resource implications of setting up and staffing a central unit.

In terms of future development, it remains to be seen whether MainFrame as a national collaboration will continue to be the main focus for collaboration. However, the benefits of joint development work are certainly perceived to outweigh the penalties. The partners have already decided to build strong regional structures which will continue the process of development in all areas of VET and exercise influence. The establishment of regional arrangements are likely to offset the problems engendered by geographical spread and inability to mount rapid local responses.

Whereas there are marked local differences, in the case of each LEA there is a central managing agency which operates relatively independent of its colleges, enabling economies of scale to facilitate self-financing provision as well as a broadly based curriculum offer to cover a wide range of abilities and vocational interests. An additional advantage is perceived to be the establishment of an overall curriculum framework common to all LEAs providing institutions. Other advantages emerged in the course of the evaluation:

- LEAs may be able to respond more rapidly and in a more coherent fashion to national and local demands.
- LEAs can act independent of workplace or college, and therefore assume the role of an 'honest broker' between the two.
- Provision on a large scale provides the opportunity for the organisation to co-ordinate a number of internal development projects.
- A central administrative and record-keeping system can be established.
- It facilitates the provision of a consortium approach which permits the participation of smaller employers.

Centralisation does involve certain disadvantages; in the case of the MainFrame partners, these were identified as creating resistance among college staff who demanded a greater role in the management of programmes and the introduction of another layer of bureaucracy which may slow down certain decision-making processes.

One particular feature of each LEA's arrangements has been the network of liaison officers. Their main responsibilities can be summarised as:

- maintaining and fostering good relations between colleges, agencies and employers;
- organising and supporting the recruitment of trainees;
- devising and implementing support and guidance provision;
- monitoring and assisting the development of properly integrated programmes;
- training and coaching supervisors in the workplace;
- holding group training sessions with trainees;
- maintaining and developing assessment and certification procedures;
- acting as advisers to programme review teams.

In some of the partner LEAs, this role is likely to be extended in the future to include functions such as marketing and acting as consultant to employers.

Liaison officers play a pivotal role in the management of MainFrame programmes. MainFrame expects the role, or at least the functions it embraces, to be of importance in the future provision of a wide range of vocational training, especially that linked to the delivery of NVQs and programmes such as TVEI.

Finally, staff development has made an important contribution to the evolution of the MainFrame project. At the collaboration's inception, a number of staff training initiatives were taken, particularly in the field of module writing. Subsequently, the FEU interim report indicated a number of areas of weakness in the project's first year of operation which had clear staff development implications. These were addressed by:

- the publication of a regular newsletter;
- a residential conference and a number of staff-training sessions on programme design and module writing;
- a dissemination conference;
- initiatives taken through GRIST-funded events and ATC programmes;
- a number of LQI projects;
- a protracted discussion and consultation on a three-year development plan;
- the establishment of a staff development working group;
- the appointment of a staff development co-ordinator.

Since MainFrame sees itself as an ongoing action research project, there is a continuing emphasis on supported curriculum-led staff development. As with the rest of MainFrame's work, this is not seen in isolation but considered an important stage in developing strategies for each of the partners to adequately confront and respond to the new challenges facing the FE service in the 1990s.

SECTION ONE — INPUTS

*Training content is to be delivered through integrated inputs*

1. To what extent is planned work experience and on-the-job training integrated with off-the-job training and education?
2. What is the process for ensuring integration?
3. How far do organisational arrangements facilitate integration? Is there a specialist organisational role with responsibility for this task?
4. Are off-the-job tutors consulted or involved in the planning and/or assessment of on-the-job training?
5. How do off-the-job training providers perceive and use work experience by:
  - i) relating it to off-the-job learning?
  - ii) using it as part of the individual trainee's pattern of progression?
6. To what extent does off-the-job training integrate with and supplement work experience by:
  - i) following mutually agreed aims?
  - ii) adding to, reinforcing, or compensating for other elements of a trainee's programme?
7. To what extent are employers and/or workplace supervisors involved in the design and assessment of training programmes?
8. To what extent are trainees motivated, progression encouraged and additional learning made available by providing opportunities to obtain relevant accreditation and qualifications?

SECTION TWO — TRAINING PLAN

*Content of training is to be expressed in a training plan with competence objectives*

9. Is the notion of competence fully understood by:
  - i) staff?
  - ii) trainees?
10. How is the training programme built around the notion of competence?
11. How and by whom have the competences been derived and validated? How far have employers and workplace supervisors been responsible for identifying and testing work-based competences? To what extent, if any, have trainees been involved in this process?
12. What is the process of ensuring that the competence-based programme is:
  - i) coherent?
  - ii) relevant?
  - iii) operating at a number of levels?
  - iv) balanced?

13. Have ways of measuring the achievement of competence been designed and developed, with a suitable method of recording progress?
14. How do the competences relate to already existing qualification schemes?
15. What problems, if any, have been identified with the use of a competence-based system?

### SECTION THREE — TRAINING PROCESSES

*Training plan should be delivered through training processes*

16. Has an induction programme been designed and implemented, covering on- and off-the-job training?
17. What does the induction programme cover?
18. Are steps taken to ensure that obligatory features of the scheme, such as health and safety, are included?
19. How are individual training plans designed? To what extent are trainees themselves active participants in this design?
20. Is the induction period used for initial assessment? If so, how does this take place?
21. To what extent is initial assessment:
  - i) linked to subsequent assessment, guidance, reviewing and recording?
  - ii) part of a planned process in which on- and off-the-job components are complementary and integrated?
  - iii) understood by staff and supportive of trainees?
22. How trainee-centred and participatory is the off-the-job element?
23. To what extent does individual learning take place?
24. What degree of empathy exists between staff and trainees? How are trainees motivated and encouraged to participate in their own learning and assessment?
25. How is the continuous assessment of trainees facilitated? How frequently do individual and group reviews take place?
26. What procedures are usually followed in review sessions, and what are the general outcomes?
27. Have satisfactory ways of recording and reporting reviews been designed? Is all the necessary documentation completed in each case?
28. Do the continuous assessment reviews take adequate steps to integrate work experience and off-the-job learning in a balanced way?
29. Are trainees generally satisfied with the procedures and outcomes of individual and group reviews?
30. Have adequate guidance and support elements been built into the training programmes in general and the reviews in particular?



## SECTION FOUR — THE FOUR OUTCOMES

*Training processes should produce four outcomes*

### I. COMPETENCE IN A JOB AND/OR RANGE OF OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

31. Does the competence-based training programme avoid narrow specialisation?
32. Do individual training programmes cover competences across a range of TOCs?
33. What opportunities are provided for 'sampling'?
34. Do trainees acquire a wide repertoire of skills?
35. Are these skills core and/or generic?
36. Are the skills acquired occupationally specific and/or occupationally comprehensive (i.e. are they sufficiently complete to enable trainees to do the job)?
37. How do they relate to CPVE core skills?
38. What opportunities are there for progression beyond two-year YTS?
39. Are individual programmes relevant and coherent?
40. Are competences achieved through 'real' work experience?
41. Do these competences relate to the world outside work?

### II. COMPETENCE IN A RANGE OF TRANSFERABLE CORE SKILLS

42. Is there a core skills checklist? How are these core skills identified and refined? Do employers and/or workplace supervisors participate in the construction of this checklist?
43. How is the core skills checklist used as part of the training programme?
44. Are core skills acquired relevant to a wide range of occupations?
45. How are core skills integrated into the training programme?
46. Do programmes provide opportunities for trainees to progress in five core areas:
  - i) number and its application;
  - ii) communication;
  - iii) problem-solving and planning;
  - iv) practical skills;
  - v) computer literacy/IT?
47. Are these opportunities provided in planned work experience and off-the-job training?
48. How broad is the concept of skill being used?
49. What modes of learning are employed in the teaching of transferable core skills?
50. To what extent are these reflexible learning processes?
51. Are trainees aware of what skills they have acquired?
52. Does this improve their adaptability and potential for progression?

53. What assessment procedures have been devised to measure this outcome?

### III. ABILITY TO TRANSFER SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO NEW SITUATIONS

54. Are the concepts of skill ownership and transferability fully understood by staff and trainees?
55. To what extent are trainees aware of the concept of transfer and transferability?
56. Are trainees encouraged to practise a few simple techniques which enable them to analyse the skills required in new situations?
57. Are there opportunities for reflection after periods of work-based learning?
58. Are trainees provided with opportunities to move to new:  
i) tasks;  
ii) jobs;  
iii) locations?
59. Can trainees check the relevance of the skills they possess and identify gaps in their own knowledge and skills that will require further training?
60. Do individual training programmes encourage trainees to do this for themselves?
61. How is new learning linked to previous learning experiences?
62. What criteria are used in assessing skills transfer?

### IV. PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

63. How is the notion of personal effectiveness understood by staff and trainees?
64. Are trainees given encouragement and opportunities for developing personal effectiveness? Have trainees learned to learn more effectively?
65. Is personal effectiveness at work integrated with personal effectiveness in the world outside work?
66. What role does the off-the-job training element take in the development and assessment of personal effectiveness?
67. What forms and procedures of assessment have been devised to measure personal effectiveness?
68. Whose responsibility is the assessment of personal effectiveness?
69. What role do trainees play in this?
70. How is assessment of personal effectiveness integrated into the whole scheme of assessment?
71. To what extent does the concept and forms of measurement of personal effectiveness relate to the CPVE core?

## SECTION FIVE — CERTIFICATION

*The production of these outcomes leads to certification*

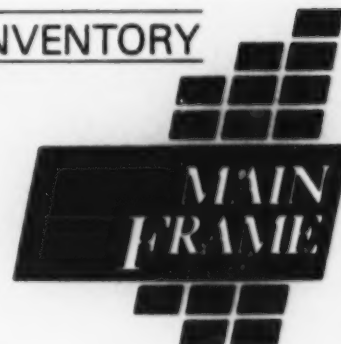
72. How are all the levels of achievement in demonstrating competences in the four outcomes recorded on the leaver's certificate?
73. What is the role of trainees in negotiating what is entered onto the certificate?
74. How well does YTS assessment fit in with other vocational and educational qualifications?
75. Is the system based on unit credit transfer? If so, how well does it operate in practice? Is further refinement required in specific occupational areas, and is the balance right between specific, general and generic components of the programme?
76. Is a record kept of trainees' entry and leaving qualifications?

## SECTION SIX — EVALUATION

77. Have all trainees who entered the scheme been able to demonstrate achievement of competences and have those competences recorded in a balanced and coherent programme, regardless of:
  - i) special needs;
  - ii) gender;
  - iii) ethnic origin?
78. Are adequate records kept to enable equal opportunities on two-year YTS to be monitored?
79. Have these questions, the process of evaluation, or other problems led to the identification of staff development needs, in work placements and off-the-job training?
80. What resources and opportunities are provided for staff development, support and further training?

# MODULAR PROGRAMME TRAINING INVENTORY

A Modular Training  
Framework for Credit  
Accumulation & Transfer



TRAINEE NAME:

PROGRAMME TITLE:

TOC CATEGORY AND CODE:

START DATE:  FINISHING DATE: EXPECTED

ACTUAL

## OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING PROVIDER(S):

1.
2.
3.

## REVIEW SCHEDULE:

| YEAR ONE          |          |        | YEAR TWO          |          |        |
|-------------------|----------|--------|-------------------|----------|--------|
| TYPE OF<br>REVIEW | DATES    |        | TYPE OF<br>REVIEW | DATES    |        |
|                   | EXPECTED | ACTUAL |                   | EXPECTED | ACTUAL |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |
|                   |          |        |                   |          |        |

## RECORD OF MODULES OR UNITS OF COMPETENCE COVERED

[illegible]

## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY USED

| Type of module          | Programme Purpose                      | Level of module                        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Gen</b> = General    | <b>IA</b> = Initial Assessment         | <b>1</b> = Pre-vocational              |
| <b>Gric</b> = Generic   | <b>FE</b> = Foundation of Education    | <b>2</b> = Part Craft                  |
| <b>Voc</b> = Vocational | <b>RE</b> = Role Execution             | <b>3</b> = Full Craft, Part Technician |
|                         | <b>TP</b> = Theory underlying Practice | <b>4</b> = Full Technician             |
|                         | <b>SD</b> = Skills Development         |                                        |
|                         | <b>T</b> = Transfer                    |                                        |
|                         | <b>INT</b> = Integration               |                                        |

## SUMMARY OF THE CORE SKILLS CHECKLIST

### Personal & Career Development

|                         |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 01 Personal Development | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 02 Career Development   | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |

### Industrial, Social & Environmental

|                                                          |                                |                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 11 Unions and Management                                 | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |
| 12 Individual at Work                                    | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |
| 13 Coping                                                | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |
| 14 Awareness of Government                               | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |
| 15 Awareness of Financial, Social and Legal Institutions | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |
| 16 Environment Concerns                                  | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |

### Communication

|                                       |                                |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 21 Listening                          | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |                                |
| 22 Talking                            | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |                                |
| 23 Questioning & Instructing          | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |                                |
| 24 Conversation                       | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 25 Reading                            | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> | <input type="text" value="5"/> |
| 26 Writing                            | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |                                |
| 27 Critical Approach to Communication | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 28 Second/Foreign Language            | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 29 Evaluation                         | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |                                |

### Social Skills

|                                    |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 31 Group Work                      | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |
| 32 Transfer/Applicability of Skill | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |
| 33 Analysis and Evaluation         | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |
| 34 Role Identification             | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 35 Categories of Groups            | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |

### Numeracy

|                              |                                |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 41 Calculations              | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> | <input type="text" value="5"/> |
| 42 Percentages               | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |                                |
| 43 Algebra                   | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |                                |
| 44 Logic                     | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 45 Measuring Skills          | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 46 Estimating/Approximating  | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |                                |
| 47 Collecting and Using Data | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |                                |
| 48 Spatial Understanding     | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |                                |
| 49 Use of Charts & Diagrams  | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |                                |

### Science and Technology

|                                                      |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 51 Appreciation of Science and Technology            | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 52 Application of Science and Technology to Problems | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |
| 53 Experimentation                                   | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 54 Applications of Scientific Theory                 | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |

### Information Technology

|                                |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 61 Awareness of IT             | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 62 Micro-computers             | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 63 Micro-computer and Robotics | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |
| 64 Data Processing             | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 65 Application of IT           | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |

### Creative Development

|                      |                                |                                |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 71 Creative Activity | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |
| 72 Cultural Activity | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |
| 73 Self Expression   | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |
| 74 Group Activities  | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |

### Practical Skills

|                              |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 81 Matching Skills           | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |
| 82 Using Machine/Equipment   | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 83 Manual Dexterity          | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |
| 84 Adaptations of Practical  | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |
| 85 Evaluation of Performance | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |

### Problem Solving

|                          |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 91 Analysis              | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> |                                |                                |
| 92 Obtaining Information | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> |                                |
| 93 Planning              | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 94 Evaluation            | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| 95 Development           | <input type="text" value="1"/> |                                |                                |                                |



## PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS PROGRESS RECORD

The trainee can:

|                                                                       |                          | Assessment 1<br><div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |                          | Assessment 2<br><div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |                          | Assessment 3<br><div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> |                          |                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                                                       | Negotiated<br>Template   | Sometimes<br>Evident                                                                                    | Normally<br>Evident      | Sometimes<br>Evident                                                                                    | Normally<br>Evident      | Sometimes<br>Evident                                                                                    | Normally<br>Evident      | Certification            |
| <b>A. Application to Training</b>                                     |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                          |
| 1. Arrive on time & ready for work                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Wear appropriate dress                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Accept the standards of cleanliness for the job                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Be keen to achieve                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Work easily without being distracted                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Persevere with tasks that are difficult or uninteresting           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Make economical use of resources                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Work effectively under pressure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Respond to the demands of new tasks that become necessary          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>B. Health and Safety</b>                                           |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                          |
| 1. Behave responsibly with dangerous tools, materials & equipment     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Show awareness of own and employers health/safety responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Recognise that cleanliness and tidiness are part of safety         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>C. Self Presentation</b>                                           |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                          |
| 1. Present a confident self-image                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Be assertive when appropriate                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Show interest & understanding                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>D. Attitude to Work</b>                                            |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                          |
| 1. Be polite and courteous                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Behave in a reliable and responsible way                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Be patient                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Admit to own errors                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Take responsibility for learning                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Accept responsibility when required                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Respond positively to suggestions for improvement                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Act according to rules and regulations                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Prevent personal feelings from affecting performance               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>E. Obtaining Information</b>                                       |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                          |
| 1. Ask for help when needed                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>F. Time Management</b>                                             |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                         |                          |                          |
| 1. Make effective use of time                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Plan and organise own work                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Attend to several things at the same time                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**OTHER RELEVANT TRAINING INFORMATION**

**WORK PLACEMENT DETAILS**

| NAME OF ORGANISATION |  | DATE STARTED | DATE FINISHED |
|----------------------|--|--------------|---------------|
| 1                    |  |              |               |
| 2                    |  |              |               |
| 3                    |  |              |               |
| 4                    |  |              |               |
| 5                    |  |              |               |
| 6                    |  |              |               |
| 7                    |  |              |               |
| 8                    |  |              |               |

**QUALIFICATIONS**

| TITLE OF QUALIFICATION | AWARDING BODY | RESULT |
|------------------------|---------------|--------|
|                        |               |        |

## NOTES



## FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

### Board of Management

#### *Chairman*

**Allan Ainsworth**, Personnel Manager, John Player Group

#### *Members*

**Mr J Baker**, Confederation of British Industry  
**Mr G A Brinsdon**, Association of Metropolitan Authorities  
**Mr M Cross**, Royal Society of Arts  
Business and Technician Education Council  
City and Guilds of London Institute  
**Mr G Kendall**, The Training Agency  
**Mr D G Libby**, Department of Education and Science  
**Mr L J Rees**, Welsh Joint Education Committee  
**Mr G M Rowarth**, Association of Principals of Colleges  
Association of Colleges for Further and Higher Education  
**Ms C Sherriff**, Trades Union Congress  
**Mr B D Short**, Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
**Mr A F Warren**, National Association of Teachers in  
Further and Higher Education  
**Mrs J Wisker**, Association of County Councils

#### *Observers*

**Dr F D Duffin**, Department of Education, Northern Ireland  
**Mrs J Hall**, National Curriculum Council  
**Mr J Howgego**, Scottish Education Department  
**Mr R L James HMI**, Welsh Office Education Department  
**Professor P Thompson**, National Council for Vocational Qualifications

#### *Secretary*

**Geoff Stanton**, Chief Officer, Further Education Unit

### Objectives

The objects for which the **Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:

- a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;
- b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvement can be effected;
- c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of, further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
- d) to disseminate and publish information, and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information, about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

### Address

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